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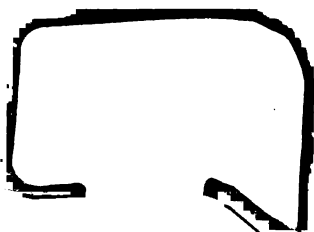
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— No 4. 1. 1885

"The power which the universe manifests to us is utterly inscrutable."—HERBERT SPENCER.

"Agnosticism simply means that a man shall not say he knows or believes that which he has no scientific grounds for professing to know or believe.....Agnosticism says that we know nothing of what may be beyond phenomena."—PROF. HUXLEY.

"I think that generally (and more and more as I grow older), but not always, an Agnostic would be the more correct description of my state of mind."—CHARLES DARWIN.

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JANUARY, 1885.

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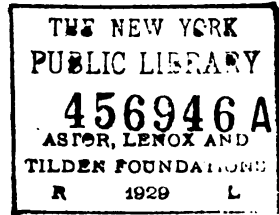
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THE AGNOSTIC.

JANUARY, 1885.

THE CONFESSION OF AGNOSTICISM.

INTRODUCTORY.

TRYING to place in order certain pieces of the puzzle of life, I find two considerable fragments apparently dissimilar and unsuited for junction. It has been customary to view each of these, not as a part of a connected whole, but as independent and complete in itself. To attempt to join them together, in any way, has often been described as a hopeless task. Few would care to espouse the cause of both ; yet each, in turn, has been highly praised. For to walk by faith in the unseen, and not, in any degree, by sight, was once considered the most exemplary of courses. Again, to walk by sight alone, distrusting or ignoring faith altogether, has, of late, become more fashionable. It has, in the past, been thought highly proper to say that this world is "a fleeting show, given for man's illusion," while the counter assertion, that it is unquestionably the best of all possible dwelling-places, has had its day. But the theory that both of these descriptions are accurate has little acceptance, has no prophet of more than village fame, and is hard to be understood. Put briefly, however, it comprehends our Agnosticism.

We are all Secularists, more or less devoutly. Every one of us is, in some degree, a practical utilitarian. However exalted and boundless the field of our philosophic survey, we must, sooner or later, descend from our observatory tower, humbly to partake of the supper prepared for us below. It may be that man liveth not by bread alone ; but bread is, nevertheless, a necessity for all of us. And the degree in which we are thus, more or less, keenly Secularists in our daily life varies according to the cogency of our other beliefs or persuasions and the extent to which they engross our attention. But it is only on paper that men can afford to disdain the present necessity.

Some, again, declare themselves Secularists pure and simple ; but it is questionable if, outside the lower ranks of civilisation, such a profession can be, consistently, carried into practice. Bread being granted highly important, indeed indispensable, the life is, nevertheless, in every sense, more than meat. If pure Secularism be endeavoured after, the result must be a purely Materialistic confession, expressed or understood, and a consultation of present needs alone, such as has always degraded and always will degrade. Nor is this creed of eating, drinking, and amusement in any way elevated by seeking to prove that such "present-life philosophy," as it is called, regards the spending of a long and virtuously respectable career as its aim. The prolongation of life by a well-calculated temperance or abstinence is merely a feat of cleverness and foresight. "A short life and a merry one" is, it may be, the motto of the profligate—and he gets that for which he bargained. But a prudent carefulness and control of appetite in order to enable us to tarry somewhat longer by the swine-trough is little higher. It is only a question of investment and returns, at the best.

Popular "present-life philosophy" is hard put to it at times ; its parrot-cry for "one world at a time" is not to be granted it, for the plain reason that, here and now, there are undoubtedly *two*. Popular Secularism meets its plainest, most unwelcome contradiction in the logical necessity laid upon it (and it professes to be severely logical) of facing present life as it *is*, and not only as it appears to be on the surface. If it be the well-merited despair of Materialism to find its reputed solid bases melting away beneath the ray of philosophic vision ; its doom to know, at last, that the "thing in itself" promises to be other than that which it seemeth to be ; so it is the discovery of the Secularist (who is Secularist and nothing more), sooner or later, that it is an awkward matter to profess belief in that which now is, only to find that, in this comprehensive statement of belief, he is committed to the intangible spiritual, altogether ghostly, "double" which lurks under the plain outlines of this every-day world. "Whatever is, is," has been considered a very safe and wholly practical conclusion ; but some doubt exists in well-informed quarters whether a somewhat Hibernian version of the maxim be not preferable, the latter verb being changed to the plural number !

Without doubt, Secular philosophy, in its place, is true ; a part of the truth, but not the whole. Alone, it cannot face the riddle of our two-fold present world. Something additional is required. In this strait the theologians have been despairingly appealed to. An answer from this class of persons is seldom sought in vain. One of these, not the least of his tribe, has instructed us, in volume form, and at considerable length, "how to make the best of both worlds ;" and a treatise so-called

might, at first sight, be looked upon as likely to shed some light on the difficulty. Unfortunately, however, the two worlds therein dwelt upon are very different from ours, being, in fact, two separate and successive states of conscious existence—placed tandem fashion, as present and to come; whereas the two worlds we have to do with are blent together, undistinguishably, in the now time. It is much to be feared that neither Augustine nor Calvin (leaving Comte out of the reckoning) can help us in this matter. Why not try to “make the best” of our indissoluble dwelling-place after another fashion, finding, at one and the same time, a workshop and a sanctuary undefiled on common earth. If there be, as some have said, a chrysolite-paradise yet to come, doubtless its aims and activities will also be manifold. Two worlds are ours now; why fret for a third, possibly bringing a fourth in its train? Plain yet profound the truth that, here and now, all things are faceted doubly—practical and mystical, earthly and spiritual, one-fold and manifold. The earthly track for bleeding feet is the highway to the heaven of heavens; earthly love is the espousal of soul with soul; a universe blind and forlorn, without a print of any shining feet, the very Holiest of All. Space! it is a truth, and yet, I say, a falsehood; for that which we know not verily filleth all things, and, were our ears not dull, we might listen the beat of unseen wings.

We have but to take this two-fold world in our thoughts and rudely divide its realms to find how poor is each portion without its fellow; to find again that “vulgar actualities” are, in truth, and by necessity, appearances only—appearances superinduced upon that which passeth understanding. Take the crude, popular view first, that with which we all begin, but which we must add to and enlarge upon, if we would be worthy of ourselves. What have we upon eyesight evidence alone? That which, by itself, were most execrable—the stall, the manger, and feeding-pen of life, some coarse pleasures ending in satiety—not a little pain, some crying and tears, and a sleep at both ends. “Make the most of it,” we are told; “it is a fairly enjoyable, though not a very elevated, life. If surfeited, you must, of course, pay the invariably exacted penalty; for, although most assuredly there is no God, yet it might just be as well for all concerned if there were one: he might sometimes, in play, if not in pity, remit some punishments. But away with sad thoughts; do not listen to the tapping of the hammer on the elm boards hard by, and, if you are hipped, pray resort to the wineskin!” And, on the other hand, we have a profitless expatiation upon the mysteries of life to the neglect of its clamant duties—moonstruck fancies; that which is true blasphemy—the contempt of life’s great sacraments; sackcloth and ashes on the fair, young head; proposals to mortify the flesh unspeakably, and other unnameable horrors. The unnatural divorce tells most cruelly here;

there is not even the consolation of the swine-husks. Vainer than vanity his desire who seeks to live in the unknown.

He alone overcometh the world who liveth in the life abundant of its central whirl, equal to the fortune of the known and the unknown—neither Secularist nor Visionary alone, but something of both, as becomes the denizen of a world most real, and yet most shadowy. Grafted deftly together, as are the real and the mystic spheres, their activities do not intermeddle with each other. All things alike are common, and yet cleansed from taint—star-dust of the heavens, spindrift of the waves, and mire of the streets.

To the extent that a man lives in this dual persuasion, he is a Secularist, *and an Agnostic*. Subtract the purely Secular position, and our Agnosticism remains. Properly, the divorce should not be made, save illustratively, for no man ever built a worthy confession of Agnosticism upon aught but daylight vision. Upon this broad Secular foundation of every-day labour the fabric of our Agnosticism is impregnably reared. When, amid the cares and joys of life, we turn to life's inmost secrets, we confess our inability to unravel them. Colloquially (the name is unimportant), we are, therefore, Agnostics. In reality, we are Agnostic also in regard to the ultimate explanation of everything around us. But we accept the practical, the insistent side, as a convenient working hypothesis. We lean upon it, find it sufficiently strong to bear our weight, and we reserve our unknown quantity in the actual and in that which underlies it, and say again, We do not know.

Thus everything is to us "as a crumb of Eucharistic bread: not without a Real Presence in it," fit for the use of the body, and also dowered with the consubstantiate indwelling of the unknown. Such is the Bread of Life.

Men clothe ideally this unknown sacramental presence, which has no name, but which they call the Absolute, with many quaint dresses of their own device—"like people, like" absolute, in the words of the old sneer. The Religionist, born again unto Agnosticism, loves to endure this mysterious noumenon with the attributes of his forsaken God; the Sentimentalist images therein the creations of fancy; the Materialist calls it "occult-matter," and fatally exhausts his argument and his vocabulary in the effort. A certain strange variety of inquirers set themselves to (of all things) question it, as if it heeded them, or were an oracle, when all other oracles are dumb. Why cannot this unknowable be analysed? say some; and they turn to stellar measurements—the length of a broomstick, the unit—seeking for its height and depth. Others, despising measurement and finding the string of thought somewhat too short for the fathomless, seek refuge in vague abstractions, and prate to us of an ocean or a flood, as if a drop of water in this connection were

not quite as good as a bucketful. And every one now laughs at the employment of capital letters to give apparent dignity to a favourite abstraction. In these and other matters, drearily laughable, it is strange that common sense has not more part ; for the approach to the highest is ever by the common path and daily track of life. Our Agnosticism, it is plain, needs a firm secular groundwork, if it is to be saved from folly. Agnostic Temple Services are spoken of. In the absence of any suggested ritual for the same, I can only speculate what object is likely to occupy the place of the accustomed Cross on the high-altar of such a sanctuary—perhaps the serpent-circle of Eternity, fittingly moulded in brass, with its tail in its mouth, as if with tongue in cheek.

Again, the depth of metaphysical subtlety may be far from reaching the confines of the unknown, when the philosophy of the wayside flower is close to the garment of the infinite. For how singularly transparent the fallacy of isolating, or attempting to isolate, the spiritual unknown from the earthly known by boundaries of division, assigning sanctity peculiar to place, person, time, or term. As if it were not of the essence of the spiritual to be independent of locality, duration, and respect of persons. The simplest object (simple no more to us, for all things are infinitely folded) is, at the same time, to us, the last and sharpest height of thought where the atmosphere is rare for mortal breath. There is, in truth, relatively, no lower and no higher. All things are full of labour ; all things are full of mystery. Some have said, daringly, that all things are full of God.

“Higher than himself [that is, than his pulsing brain-pulp] can no man think.” So we are told. The saying is true, if, by the result of that thinking, be meant that which is vulgarly useful, practical, or (as we say) to purpose. But if it be meant thereby that beyond his “gnosis” no man can think, either in the sense of arrival at the point of meeting with the unknowable, or in the sense of being incapable of possible influence *from* the unknown in which he lives and moves and hath his being—then, I, for one, dissent. To tell the limit of man’s height in this respect, you must have passed the impassable limit, and yourself divined that which you say is beyond your powers. If you know not the secrets of the forbidden dark around us, how know you that they have no share in the issues of life? Granted communication shut and barred one way, how know you it to be impenetrable the other, and not as an “endosmose” without an “exosmose”? How affirm dogmatically that, in the murky depths with which we are swathed, as with folding bands, we have neither lot nor part, when, for aught you can tell, they may be our home of homes? Let such dogmatism be far from us, and let our Agnosticism be frank. If depth there be beyond us (and who can doubt it?), let the possibilities of that depth be left undefined, yet not ignored

nor flouted. If I live in a two-fold world, one part of my habitation is not enough for me, not high enough for the measure of the stature of my fulness. I live and move and have my being and my citizenship in the twain.

G. M. McC.

(*To be continued.*)

AGNOSTIC.

A BOUNDLESS sea beyond thee there doth lie ;
 Give o'er, O man ! withdraw thy weary eye ;
 No mortal mind can reach the mystic *Why* :
 Our seas, *in seeming only*, meet the sky.
 Set, then, thy sail to reach the homely shore ;
Truth there alone, and *All* thou canst explore
 Invite thine earnest search—an endless store :
 Content thyself with this, not wander more.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

HERBERT SPENCER'S PHILOSOPHY: AN EXPOSITION.

INTRODUCTORY.

AT Derby, in 1820, was born, never to die, the greatest philosopher that the world has ever seen. Herbert Spencer has given the world the Synthetic Philosophy, and in return the world has given him immortality.

The two philosophers whose greatness approximates most nearly to that of Herbert Spencer are Auguste Comte and Francis Bacon. Yet they can hardly be said to come within a measurable distance of him. As a philosopher he has not, either in the ancient world or in the modern, any one approaching a compeer. The Platonic philosophy is eclipsed by the Baconian, the Baconian by the Comtean, and the Comtean by the Spencerian. Plato is not more decidedly inferior to Bacon, Bacon is not more decidedly inferior to Comte, than Spencer is superior to all three. The "Republic" of Plato is assuredly a great work. The "De Augmentis" and the "Novum Organum" of Bacon are greater still. But these three productions, bound up together, are of much less value than the "Positive Philosophy," and the "Positive Philosophy" bound up with them is of much less value than the "Synthetic Philosophy." It is not that the former are comparatively poor; but it is that the latter is superlatively rich.

Spencer is, without doubt, the first of philosophers. There is no second. He so far outdistances all competitors as to leave a great gap between himself and the one who comes nearest to him. That gap remains to be filled up. What Demosthenes is to orators, what Cæsar is to warriors, what Columbus is to discoverers, what Shakespeare is to dramatists, what Milton is to poets, what Macaulay is to historians, Spencer is to philosophers. He is all that, and much more.

Spencer's early training was admirably adapted as discipline to his gigantic intellect. Educated as he was by his father—a tutor—and by his uncle—an Established Church clergyman—his youth was enamoured of Civil Engineering. This he studied for eight years, during which he contributed to the leading reviews many luminous essays. But the Essays and the Engineering soon began to clash, and for some time he divided his energies between the two, with results more or less disastrous to both—more disastrous to the Engineering, less disastrous

to the Essays. Ultimately the Engineering lost, and the Essays gained him; for he abandoned for ever his profession, and for ever devoted himself to philosophy. There remain, however, upon all his writings traces—traces no less distinct than symmetrical—of the beauty as well as of the use of that profession. These traces are discernible equally on the first volume of the Synthesis and on the last—on “First Principles” and on “The Data of Ethics.”

In 1860, just a quarter of a century ago, Spencer commenced the publication, in quarterly parts, of his “System of Synthetic Philosophy,” the initial volume being, of course, “First Principles.” Since then five thousand copies (published at sixteen shillings each) of that work have been printed. Of the other volumes in the “Synthetic” series the following number have been sold:—“The Principles of Biology” (thirty-four shillings), three thousand; “The Principles of Psychology” (thirty-six shillings), four thousand; “The Principles of Sociology” (one guinea), two thousand; “The Principles of Ethics” (of which as yet the first part only is issued, containing the “Data of Ethics”), three thousand. Outside the “Synthetic” series there is a half-guinea volume on “The Study of Sociology,” which has run through nine editions; a work on “Education: Intellectual, Moral, and Physical,” through six editions; and three volumes of “Essays: Scientific, Political, and Speculative,” through three editions; besides a small volume on “Man *versus* the State,” comprising articles recently contributed to the reviews. As yet, however, we have mentioned only the English editions. In America Spencer’s works have been published and read even more extensively than on this side of the Atlantic; and some of them have been translated into eight or nine different languages, including French, German, Russian, Dutch, and Portuguese.

The fact that in so short a period so large a number of such expensive works should have been perused by such a varied class of readers is, to say the least, remarkable. It is a slight indication of the extent to which the mind of this Agnostic Hercules has already begun to dominate the thought of modern times.

Spencer’s earlier writings, like Macaulay’s, seem to have been the school in which he prepared for the great work of his life. And an excellent school it was. The brilliant critical essayist never lived to complete his matchless History: graspingly grim Death early laid his iron grip upon the historian. And what Death has done once he may do again. We can but hope that the all-embracing philosophic essayist may be spared to finish his matchless “Synthesis.” But it is hoping almost against hope, for Mr. Spencer’s health is now very precarious. The life of the longest-lived is so short in years that the life of the shortest-lived should be made long by labour.

The genius of Spencer consists partially, perhaps mainly, in his masterly powers of generalisation, and in his beautiful application of universal principles. Tyndall, Huxley, Büchner, are Specialists, and each is, doubtless, equally great within his own small sphere. But the three rolled into one would hardly make a Darwin. Yet Spencer was a Darwinian before Darwin, and in a much more comprehensive sense. The special doctrine so grandly enforced in "The Origin of Species," and in subsequent works, is, in the "Synthetic Philosophy," applied to all classes of phenomena. The magic power with which Mr. Spencer unfolds and illustrates the truths of Evolution is enchanting. He deals not only with the evolution of the *physique*, but also with the evolution of mind, of morals, and of religion. "The Origin of Species" confines itself to Organic Evolution; but the "Synthesis" embraces Inorganic, Organic, and Super-Organic Development. Inorganic development, from the growth of a grain of sand to that of a world; organic development, from the lowliest form in plant-life to the grandest form of man; super-organic development, from the crudest conception to the most complex series of thoughts: all these are dwelt upon with a wealth of illustration and with a fertility of resource unknown in any other system of Philosophy.

Besides this august power of generalisation, Spencer has a power of observation scarcely less marvellous. Among scientists Darwin, as a collector of facts, stands pre-eminent. For his patience and perseverance, for his sagacity and penetration, he is justly renowned. The breadth and depth of his researches in Anatomy, in Biology, in Physiology, in Zoology, in Geology, and in Botany entitle him to be classed among the giants in observation. Yet, by the side of Spencer, Darwin is a dwarf. Darwin's observations belong exclusively to the concrete world, and cover only a comparatively small portion of that; but there is no fact and no theory, either in the concrete or in the abstract world, with which Spencer is not perfectly familiar, and of which he is not complete master. Spencer has all the grasp of Darwin, with a range to which Darwin is an utter stranger. The fields traversed by Darwin are indeed vast and varied; but Spencer's intellectual area is bounded only by the limits of human thought. Darwin is confined in space and in time to a few sciences; while Spencer is bounded on the one hand only by infinity, and on the other only by eternity.

Spencer and Comte have little in common. The difference between them is not superficial, but fundamental. It is the difference between the North Pole and the South, between day and night, between winter and summer, between yes and no, between right and wrong. Spencer is no more an Anglicised Comte than Comte is a Frenchified Spencer.

There is, indeed, one sense in which Spencer can be said to agree

with Comte, and that is the sense in which all modern thinkers agree with one another. The general mode of thought and the general way of interpreting phenomena, called by Comte "*Philosophie Positive*," is not peculiar to the Comtean system, for it is the gradual growth of two centuries. What Comte aims at is the re-organisation of philosophy and the scientific interpretation of classes of phenomena not previously dealt with in a scientific manner. Well, in that sense, Spencer is a Comtean. But, in that sense, Comte is a Baconian. Bacon, many generations before Comte, entertained in an embryonic form the same conception as that which Comte, with great originality and immense fertility, has so elaborately worked out. Bacon, as well as Comte, purposed to re-organise the sciences. Bacon held that "*Physics is the mother of all the Sciences*;" that the sciences can be advanced only by combining them; that moral and civil philosophy cannot flourish when separated from natural philosophy; and that a social science grows out of a physical one. And every recognised thinker since Bacon's time, including Comte and Spencer, has accepted these leading doctrines. Here the resemblance between the English and the French philosopher begins—and here it ends.

At one with Comte on every point upon which Comte is at one with every other philosopher, Spencer rejects all the cardinal principles of Positivism—all the distinguishing features of the system. To these he opposes either a direct negative or a widely-different proposition. Comte's science is not exclusively Comtean, any more than Bacon's, any more than Plato's. The only thing about Comte which is peculiar to Positivism is his re-organisation of the sciences. This in its totality is repudiated by Spencer. Spencer accepts Comte's facts minus Comte's method. Perhaps the best way of accentuating the rival contentions of the two philosophies is to look at them side by side. Let us, then, place them in parallel columns:—

COMTEAN PROPOSITIONS.

The inquiry, how organic beings have originated, is a useless speculation, since species are immutable.

Of what is commonly known of mental science, all that most important part which consists of the subjective analysis of our ideas is an impossibility.

SPENCERIAN PROPOSITIONS.

This inquiry not only admits of an answer, but will be answered. That division of Biology which concerns itself with the origin of species is the supreme division. For on the verdict of Biology must wholly depend our conception of human nature—past, present, and future; our theory of mind; and our theory of society.

That a subjective science of the mind is not an impossibility may be seen from the fact that the "*Principles of Psychology*" is already published, and that half of it is purely subjective.

COMTEAN PROPOSITIONS.

The ideal of society is one in which *government* is developed to the greatest extent; in which class-functions are far more under conscious public regulation than now; in which hierarchical organisation with unquestioned authority shall guide everything; in which the individual life shall be subordinated in the greatest degree to the social life.

The "Philosophic Positive" excludes the consciousness of a cause manifested to us in all phenomena, and yet holds that there must be a religion which must have an object. That object is Humanity. This Collective Life of Society is the *Etre Suprême*, the only one we can know, and therefore the only one we can worship.

So much for Spencer as compared with other philosophers. In our next paper we shall commence an exposition of "First Principles," beginning with "Religion and Science."

SPENCERIAN PROPOSITIONS.

The ideal of society towards which we are progressing is one in which *government* will be reduced to the smallest amount possible, and *freedom* increased to the greatest amount possible—one in which human nature will have become so moulded by social discipline into fitness for the social state that it will need little external restraint, but will be self-restrained; one in which the citizen will tolerate no interference with his freedom, save that which maintains the equal freedom of others; one in which the spontaneous co-operation which has developed our industrial system, and is now developing it with increased rapidity, will produce agencies for the discharge of nearly all social functions, and will leave to the primary governmental agency nothing beyond the function of maintaining those conditions to free action which make spontaneous co-operation possible; one in which individual life will be pushed to the greatest extent consistent with social life; and in which social life will have no other end than to maintain the complete sphere for individual life.

The "Synthetic Philosophy" holds, on the contrary, that the object of religious sentiment will ever continue to be that which it has ever been—the unknown source of things. Having in the course of evolution come to have for its object of contemplation the Infinite Unknowable, the religious sentiment can never again (unless by retrogression) take a Finite Knowable, like Humanity, for its object of contemplation.

IGNOTUS.

IS AGNOSTICISM PHILOSOPHICAL?

THE mere fact that for some years past Agnosticism has established itself as one of the principal forces of modern thought is alone a substantial guarantee for its philosophic value; and when this is considered in conjunction with the fact of its recognition and adoption by many of the foremost thinkers of the time, the presumption in favour of its excellence is very considerably enhanced. But no advocate of Agnosticism would ever venture to adduce the circumstance of its popularity as any tangible evidence of its truth. If the doctrine of Nescience be worthy of acceptance at all, it can only be so because of its intrinsic merit, and the essentials to this characteristic must be looked for in its superior inherent simplicity and consistency, as contradistinguished from all other metaphysical speculations as to the problem of the universe. Unless it can triumphantly resist the most tremendous onslaughts that its enemies are capable of making upon it, it is unworthy of further attention or support. The present paper will be devoted to a consideration—and, as the writer conceives, disposal—of some objections to Agnosticism, which are chiefly important and serious because they affect to question the philosophical validity of Agnostic principles.

The case made out by its censors against Agnosticism may be briefly, but fairly, stated as follows:—All logical processes are designed to resolve the matter of thought into the propositional and syllogistic forms. Now, every proposition, and therefore every syllogism, consisting as it does of propositions, involves, and must necessarily involve, alternative predications—that is to say, every proposition either affirms or denies something respecting a given subject; so that all propositions are classified either as affirmative or negative. When the antitheses are both quantitative and qualitative, as in the propositions, All men are mortal—No men are mortal, we have a logical contradiction; whereas where the conflict is simply quantitative, as in the propositions, Some men are mortal—Some men are not mortal, it is known as a contrary. Of two contraries both may be true or both false. Of two contradictories one must be true and one false; both cannot be true, and it is impossible for both to be false. We may ring the changes again and again upon these contradictories, but always with the same result. Either a subject has or has not certain qualities; the one or the other must be true. To apply this

canon of logic to the problem of the universe, we find ourselves obliged to declare respecting it—(*a*) That the cosmos either had a beginning or it had not; (*b*) That the universe is either finite or infinite; (*c*) That intelligence is either material or immaterial; and so of force. Acting upon the principle of the necessary truth of one of two contradictories, the Theist holds that the universe is an effect, and therefore had a specific genesis; that it is infinite, and that intelligence is hyper-physical. In accordance with the same principle, the Atheist adopts the respective opposites of the preceding. But the Agnostic declines to assume either position, on the plea that, being equally incapable of conceiving of the terms of one or other of the propositions, he is on that account debarred from any homologation of them. Such an attitude is obviously quite unphilosophical, and is totally at variance with every law of logic and reason. It is unphilosophical because it rests upon the postulate that we should not assert what we do not know, an admission of which would utterly subvert all mentation whatsoever. It is both unphilosophical and illogical, inasmuch as it traverses the doctrine of contradictories, according to which we are bound to admit that, of two opposites, one must be true. Now, this being so, a rejection of two contradictories entails the repudiation of a truth. But any system which, while ostensibly engaged in the ascertainment of truth, openly disavows it, is not only inconsistent—it is immoral.

To enlarge upon the first objection which is directed against the aphorism, that we should not assert what we do not know, which is really the foundation-stone of the whole fabric of Agnostic philosophy—why, if we were to abandon ourselves implicitly to its guidance, we should incontinently be plunged into inextricable confusion. What do we certainly know? In reality, only one thing, and that is the central and sometimes very awkward fact of our own existence. All the rest is inference. We do not know—we only infer—the existence of our fellow-men and of all other animals and things; and this inferential knowledge, if knowledge it can be called, is further weakened and debased by being superimposed upon a series of assumptions. When we say that the sun will rise to-morrow morning, or that oxygen and hydrogen, if mixed together in definite proportions and under certain conditions, will combine to form water, it is at once evident that what we predicate of those subjects is emitted on the assumption that, because certain phenomena known respectively as sunrise and chemical action (as exemplified in the synthesis of water) have always been observed hitherto in conjunction with certain conditions, we may therefore infer, given their future concomitance, precisely identical results. In all this, tacitly or explicitly, we assume a principle of uniformity in the co-existence and succession of these multitudinous

phenomena, which collectively constitute the system of nature. Similarly, in studying the relations subsisting between phenomena, we perceive in them an element of sameness and constancy, which we define in formal terms as a law of nature. But a law of nature is really nothing more than the recorded expression of an observed sequence in the incidence of events. This, of course, implies, and has always been understood to imply, that the relation called a law will unvaryingly operate under conditions the same as, or corresponding with, those under which it is known to have acted in the past. But, if knowledge be a resultant of the intimations of sense, reason vouchsafes no assurance of such continuity: even so eminent a representative of experiential philosophy as Mr. Mill had to admit that there cannot be a complete induction. We may state, as a general principle of the nature of matter, that bodies attract each other in proportion to their masses, and inversely as the square of the distance; but, until we have exhausted every possible instance of the interaction of bodies, we can never construct a complete induction. Keeping strictly to the dictum, "We should not assert what we do not know," we find ourselves reduced to a state of abject intellectual ineptitude, by which we are bereft of every vestige of knowledge, save the miserable residuum of the consciousness of our own existence. For the understanding refuses its assent to a process of thought which is rendered illicit by its want of an element essential to its noetic integrity. No amount of experience derived from the past, and having as its antecedents so many sensations and groups of sensations, can ever authorise us to forestall an unknown future. The mind, with such scanty resources, is incapable of filling up the hiatus; but we do fill up the hiatus, and in the very act of doing so we either wittingly or unwittingly assert what we do not know. But if, under any conceivable circumstances, it becomes necessary to surrender the dictum just cited, it is obvious that the objection to the occurrence of the unknown, as an element in any form of belief, can never militate against the credibility of that belief. If the unknown may perform a legitimate function in the lower sphere of reasoning, who shall venture to deny it a place in the higher?

As to the rejection of contradictories, when one of the antinomies necessarily contains a truth (as must always be the case) there logic and reason alike prescribe a definitive course. To say that the truth in this particular instance is undiscoverable is practically to beg the whole question, while to deliberately abstain from a specific selection, by deciding to treat the antitheses as philosophically indifferent, is, as previously contended, such a wanton and flagrant disavowal of truth as instantly to condemn the system which is responsible for it.

Having thus concisely but adequately summarised the most salient

features in the impeachment of Agnostic philosophy, we may now proceed to examine and rebut the charges preferred against it.

The dictum, "That we should not assert what we do not know," seems so reasonable on the face of it that we are almost disposed to endorse it without further ado. That it forms the basis of the Agnostic thesis need not be denied. What we have to determine is the precise meaning of the terms comprised in the formula, and the exact nature and scope of the formula itself. The only term in the proposition for which a definition is really required is the term "know." What is meant when we say that we know or do not know anything? The only source of knowledge with which the Agnostic is conversant is the external world; and the only medium, as far as he can discover, through which his mind can receive knowledge is his senses. To say that we know a thing, therefore, is to affirm that we perceive it to be what our sensations tell us it is. To profess ignorance of it is to admit that we have had no sensuous experience of it. When, however, we come to scrutinise the components of our knowledge, we find that some of them do not, properly speaking, belong to either of the categories above-named. Every one, for instance, has a firm and inalienable expectation that the future will be essentially the same as the past. But if cognition is only possible in the presence, or subsequent to the incidence, of the object cognised, how can we know the future? The process in virtue of which we assume its certitude is one of the simplest and most primitive in the whole range of psychical activity. In surveying phenomena with which long observation has made us familiar, we often arrive at a point beyond which we cannot go; and yet, notwithstanding the apparently impassable limit thus imposed upon our progress, we infer that the causes at work, and the phenomena accruing from their operation, although lying beyond our mental horizon, are the same in kind, if different in degree, from those to which we are accustomed. To give a concrete instance: It was the belief of the ancients that the liver, heart, stomach, and other special organs of the body were induced and controlled by guiding and ministering spirits. The researches and discoveries of physiology have conspired to depose the spirits one by one, by demonstrating that the action of these organs is almost entirely due to purely physico-chemical causes. We do not yet know what is the precise nature of the sum of remarkable and special activities called life; but the consensus of learned opinion is—and that opinion is founded upon what we know of the physical phases of physiological processes—that life is a resultant of the interaction of mechanical forces in the midst of special combinations of matter. Here we have, in the domain of science, a good example of what, in the commoner affairs of the world, is the inductive process usually in vogue. It is a recognised canon of philo-

sophy that what, for want of demonstrative proof, we are obliged to infer ought always to possess something in common with what is positively known. Unless this canon be accepted and acted upon, the opposite of it must be true—that is, that inferred existences need not, excepting the fact of their being, possess anything in common with actual existences which is too transparent an absurdity to deserve serious notice.

To epitomise this argument. All that is known has at some time or the other been actually experienced, or is a corollary derived from experience. Whatever is unknown is that which has not yet come within the compass of the senses or the sphere of the intellect. Technically, it may be true that I do not know that Nature, although hitherto constant, will continue so for another moment ; but my consciousness assures me of the contrary. The opposite supposition, that, notwithstanding the steady, undeviating course of Nature in the past and up to the present juncture, she may suddenly, and without a moment's warning, revoke her laws and subvert her order, is too monstrous for credence. Human science and art would be impossible if it were not for the assumption—which is of the nature of knowledge as much as Euclid's axioms—that Nature is uniform in her operations. Agnosticism, therefore, is true to its implicate, which forbids the incorporation of the unknown in any proposition or doctrine. What seems to be unknown in human thought is, in reality, only a presage of the known. Agnosticism carefully distinguishes between the unknown and the unknowable. The unknown, although not eligible for predication, is probably susceptible of conversion into the known. The unknowable can never, in the present condition of things, be brought within the sphere of the human understanding. The most certain proof of this is the incapacity of the mind to assign any specific value to the terms used in propositions respecting the arcana of the universe. That these terms do not represent any actual idea is sufficiently clear from their inherent inchoateness. The more rigorously they are examined, the more obscure and anarchical they become. The fact is, as Herbert Spencer has pointed out, that propositions containing such terms are verbally intelligible, and no more. We may speak of a square circle or a long short line with equal propriety. The Agnostic, while firmly deprecating all intrusion of the unknown into ordinary reasoning, totally excludes the unknowable, as irreducible to any subjective process.

The remaining objection as to the obligatoriness of an acceptance of one of two contradictories, and the necessary rejection of a truth in the event of a rejection of both propositions, may be briefly dealt with. Either the moon is or is not inhabited. One or either of these alternatives must be true. But what if the evidences for and against these propositions are so vague and conflicting as to prevent the judgment

from arriving at any conclusions? What conceivable resource is there but to confess total ignorance of the whole question? Surely there is a mental state in which the judgment is, from want of the conditions essential to its operations, constrained into abeyance; and that is just the Agnostic frame of mind. There can be no repudiation of a truth which is not demonstrated to be such. In the case of contradictories, there being no possibility of ascertaining in which of the propositions the truth lies, it is self-evident that there can be no conscious, and, therefore, no reprehensible, denial of it.

Whatever be the vicissitudes and reverses which Agnostic philosophy is yet destined to undergo, there is not the remotest doubt as to its ultimate triumph. It is swiftly and irresistibly superseding the crude and effete creeds and figments of a hoary and credulous antiquity. The day is not far distant when men, emulating the example of the ancient Athenians, will once more erect an altar, dedicated not to "the unknown God," but in commemoration of the final and glorious victory of Truth over all its enemies.

J. P. GILMOUR.

AGNOSTICISM AND THEISM.

A REJOINDER.

WITHOUT attempting to follow Captain W. B. McTaggart through the metaphysical subtleties of his Reply,* I may briefly set forth the *intellectual* basis of my own Theistic belief: with its *moral* grounds I am not at present concerned.

1. I take my stand, with Descartes and Berkeley, upon the *individual consciousness* of the Ego as his ultimate court of appeal, and upon its experiences as the basis of all his knowledge and all his beliefs.

2. With Reid and his successors, I regard the conviction which every Ego entertains of the existence of a world external to himself, as resting upon his "common sense;" by which I understand (as explained in my "Mental Physiology") the general resultant of the Ego's experiences, co-ordinated by the automatic working of his own brain.

3. It is this "common sense" which assures the Ego of the existence of other individuals having attributes more or less resembling his own, and forms the basis of those ideal representations of their several physical and mental characters, which he constructs out of his own mental experiences, and on which he acts in his intercourse with them.

4. It is, again, by the like process that the Ego is brought to recognise human agency, when he knows nothing whatever of the agent. That a well-characterised "flint-implement" could have been shaped either by a succession of "accidental" collisions, or by the act of any inferior creature, is repugnant to "common sense," which unhesitatingly accepts it as a product of human handiwork, though there is no logical proof that it is so. In like manner, the "common sense" of every reader unhesitatingly recognises the work of *mind* in an ordinary printed page; it being impossible for him to believe that the orderly arrangement of letters in words and sentences, constituting a language intelligible to him, can have been otherwise than *intentional*.

5. Of the particular ideas or feelings which the writer of that page intended to call forth in his readers' minds, by the use of language fitted to excite them, the Ego feels assured by his own conscious experiences;

* "The Agnostic Annual: 1885," pp. 35-37.

and, using these as his basis, he forms a conception—more or less accurate—of the mental attributes of the *alter ego* who has thus expressed himself.

6. On precisely the same grounds, I recognise Mind and Intention in Nature ; being no more able to believe the Cosmos to have been the product of chance, than to believe that a page of Shakspeare has been made up by a shaking-together of its component letters. To account for the "Order of Nature" by attributing it to the "potentialities of Matter," is (to my mind) like attributing Hamlet's soliloquy to mutual attraction of printers' types.

7. So I am led by my own consciousness of Personal agency, and by recognition of a like exertion on the part of other men, to believe that the phenomena of the Universe around me depend upon *personal* Causation. The scientific study of these phenomena distinctly points to the *unity* of that Causation ; the so-called "Forces of Nature" being but different forms of one and the same "Energy," while her so-called "Laws" are merely the philosopher's mode of representing the uniformities he witnesses in its operation.

8. Fully accepting "Evolution" as the most probable account of the mode in which the existing universe (including Man himself) came into being, I find in it no explanation of its *origin* ; but am necessarily led back in thought to a *beginning*, and to a subsequent unceasing exertion of developmental energy—just as an arithmetical or geometrical progression involves the conception of a *first term* and a *factor*.

9. Looking, with the eye of Science, at the multitudinous progressions along different lines which have been included in the Evolution of the existing Universe, at the complexity of their mutual relations, and at the wonderful harmony of the entire scheme, I feel impressed with the conviction that such a result could not have come about without an original pre-ordination. As Dr. Martineau has pertinently asked, "If it takes *mind* to construe the world, how can it require the negation of mind to constitute it?"

10. I do not pretend to be able to frame any conception of God that passes the limits of my own idealising faculty. But as I recognise in the works of the great Master-minds of our race the manifestation of powers compared with which my own are but rudimentary, and see, in the new lines of thought which they are continually opening up, the evidence of the ever-widening range of the human intellect, so, in the study of Nature, do I find the evidences of an Author whose capacity immeasurably transcends theirs, and ranges through all time and all space. I invest that Author with those attributes, which, as manifested in man, we designate as Power and Wisdom ; and project them, as well as my finite capacity admits, upon Infinity. And as I reverence Newton

and Darwin for what they have revealed to us of the Order of Nature, I bow in humble adoration before the Infinite Mind which ordered it ; esteeming it my highest intellectual privilege to employ such faculties as I possess in the study of those pages, which, as Lord Bacon said, "are written in the only language which hath gone forth to all the ends of the earth, unaffected by the confusion of Babel."

W. B. CARPENTER.

REPLY TO DR. CARPENTER.

IN continuation of Dr. Carpenter's defence of Theism, as published in this the first number of *THE AGNOSTIC*, a proof of which I have been favoured with, he has now formulated his belief—or, rather, his grounds for belief—in a definite manner ; and, if the truth were known, it is probable that he has done this, in reality, for the first time.

In taking up his position, Dr. Carpenter has finally declined to occupy the inner citadel of Metaphysics ; then, passing through the outer earthworks of Philosophy, and finding even that too cramped by the trammels of logic and common sense, he has finally abandoned the fortifications altogether, and has entrenched himself outside the walls in a shelter which can only be regarded in the light of an outhouse. This position is one which will require but little ammunition to riddle. No siege guns, or even field-batteries, need be brought into requisition, or scarcely the pelt of small-arm bullets. One war rocket would be more than sufficient—nay, one "boy's November squib," we think, would cause most people to abandon so frail a tenement.

The argument used is the "one from design ;" this old, old tale—best expressed, perhaps, by Paley, in his "Evidences"—amounting merely to this :—A watch is found on a desert island by some castaway who has never seen or heard of a watch. After much examination and thought, he finds that it will go, and will mark the hours and minutes ; *ergo*, this is not the result of chance, but there was a designer who made it with that special object. So Dr. Carpenter, on the same grounds, "recognises mind and intention in nature, being no more able to believe the cosmos to have been the product of chance than to believe that a page of Shakspeare has been made up by a shaking together of its component letters." And elsewhere he invests the author of this universe with Infinite Wisdom, Power, and Goodness, and, therefore, proclaims him a being to be loved and worshipped. But this is only a persistent looking at things from one point of view, regardless of all others—a blind optimism, which asserts that all is for the best in this best of all possible worlds. Supposing our friend who

finds the watch discovers that, though it will mark the hours and minutes, it does so very irregularly and badly ; that it has no compensation balance, and is a very ill-adapted and clumsy machine altogether. Will he then attribute infinite wisdom to the designer ? So with Dr. Carpenter. If his experience of this world and its ways leads him to look upon it as the work of an all-benevolent and all-powerful one, surely there is also sufficient evidence to induce other and less sanguine minds to recognise it as the work of an all-malevolent or of a partly-powerful being. The two views may be well expressed side by side, thus :—

“There is a voice in everything ;
In every plant a lesson lies ;
And every insect on the wing
Proclaims its maker as it flies ”
—*Quoted by the Rev. Z. B. Woffendale,*
“*Secular Review*,” Sept. 8th, 1883.

“There is a curse in everything ;
In every plant a poison lies ;
And every insect bears a sting,
From bumble bees to bummer flies.”
—*Response by George Ernest, “Secular*
Review,” Sept. 15th, 1883.

As a matter of fact, the evidence is so evenly balanced that the outcome of a comprehensive survey has resulted in the dualism which has pervaded and underlies all the great religions of the world. Ormuzd and Ahriman ; Jah and Satan ; pull Devil, pull Baker.

It is, of course, quite competent for Dr. Carpenter to remain satisfied for himself in his one-sided optimism ; but when, while patronising Agnosticism, he still holds up his own Theism as a superior article, and wishes others to think so too, then, of course, some little argument is expected. As a matter of fact, Agnosticism is the outcome of a comprehensive view of all the evidence from every side. As a result, the Agnostic does not feel justified in asserting either a one-sided Optimism or a one-sided Pessimism ; neither does Agnosticism see its way to accept the dualism of two everlasting principles, gods or things : Ormuzd and Ahriman, God and the Devil. Neither does it feel justified in asserting that there are sufficient evidences of an almighty and all-wise Designer ; or, again, that there are no evidences of such a being. The whole question is shrouded in mystery ; and thus, after a rational, unbiassed, and comprehensive survey of *all the evidence obtained from every available source*, Agnosticism joins none of the contending schools who cry “Lo here !” or “Lo there !” Before the mysteries, and face to face with the great white throne, where the very angels veil their faces, in all humbleness and reverence the Agnostic raises neither eyes nor voice in praise which might be blasphemy, and—

“In the far presence of the grand Unknown
For ever he is dumb.”*

W. B. McTAGGART.

* “Songs by the Wayside of an Agnostic’s Life.” By Himself. (Stewart & Co., 41, Farringdon Street, E.C.)

SACRED AND SECULAR.

FROM the earliest times men have been in the habit of drawing a marked distinction between the so-called sacred and the profane, or what we should now perhaps more accurately describe as the sacred and the secular. Is it possible to discover any satisfactory reason for this distinction; or is it a practice based upon one of those singular phantasies of the human mind which, in some shape or form, have prevailed in all ages, giving a bias to human thought and a kind of warp to the intellectual faculties—distorting the mental vision and causing things to appear coloured according to the perceptions of the observer? It is difficult to understand how any belief can have become universal, or even general, unless there were some truth at the bottom of it. Yet we know that in many instances certain beliefs have obtained popular acquiescence although founded upon the slenderest evidence. The grossest and most degrading superstitions have probably, in most cases, some natural fact underlying them, which forms their root, and from which they have grown and developed into the hideous things they appear, after many centuries of development. An abnormal growth in the human body which endangers the life of the entire organism by drawing away the vital action from distant healthy parts and obstructing the free play of organs in the immediate vicinity of the disease, and which requires the knife of the surgeon to extirpate it, is yet only a morbid development of a healthy action. So it is in the body politic, or in the moral, or social, or intellectual spheres. The wildest chimeras, the most extravagant phantoms, are simply excrescences originating in that which was perfectly natural, but which has supported an abnormal growth, distorting the whole form, and misdirecting the faculties, until the original fact has become quite overlooked. In Dr. Herbert Mayo's work on "The Truths Underlying Popular Superstitions," and in other books of a similar kind, many very curious illustrations of this fact will be found. Some of these are well known to every person of education, so simple are they in their explanation; while others are far more obscure, and require a good deal of antiquarian research to discover. Yet, doubtless, the same law applies to all. It is not my intention to dwell upon these singular phases of human nature, and they are only referred to here thus incidentally to illustrate the confusion of thought that obtains in some

minds as to the true meaning and scope of the terms Sacred and Secular.

The origin of the idea that the sacred differs very considerably from the secular is of the same character, and the growth of the unnatural development of the original ideas can be traced to the same source, as other theological perversions—namely, an abnormal mind, darkened by ignorance and misled by priestly misrepresentations. Secularists and Agnostics are frequently accused of seeking to destroy everything that is sacred, and thus being vandals of the very worst type, seeking to crush out the most holy of the human sentiments and to lay in ashes all the institutions which men have prized above everything else on earth. We plead not guilty to this charge. Our object is not to destroy the sacred, but to elevate the secular. We see no necessity for the distinction that is supposed to exist between the two; but it is our endeavour to make them both alike—not, however, by degrading either, but by exalting both to their legitimate eminence and correct signification. We only object to the sacred, as such, so far as it diverts proper attention from the secular. In one sense we hold all things to be sacred; in another sense nothing claims that appellation. Everything, therefore, will depend upon the meaning which is attached to the word. And that it is used in several different senses even by those who regard it as being of great religious importance will be demonstrated in subsequent articles.

The common opinion, current among theologians, recognises no sacredness in nature, and none in man, as such. There is another kingdom outside nature, which it terms the kingdom of grace, and to this everything that is sacred belongs. Man, it proclaims, has fallen, and even external nature has been blighted by a fearful curse; so that everywhere, in bold relief, stand in the foreground sin and its consequences. This is the idea against which, in the name of a libelled humanity, we wage an unceasing war. The sacred is in man and in nature, or nowhere. Even the sanctities of religion are real only so far as they relate to man, and any sacredness that appertains to them belongs to humanity at large. The true source of all sacredness must be thought and feeling—in other words, the sacred must be internal to man, and must, therefore, depend for its character upon the mind in which it originates. Nothing that is said by another person can make me regard as sacred that which I find no reason for believing to be good. And this is just where, in my opinion, the popular religious theory and idea of sanctity breaks down. According to this theory, a thing is not sacred in proportion to its goodness and its capacity to benefit mankind, but merely in proportion to its assumed efficacy of appeasing the wrath of an angry God. Religion seeks to secure salva-

tion in the hercafter rather than here, in another world instead of in this; and hence all that is sacred must be related to that other state, and not to the present life. And, so far as this future happiness is supposed to be affected by a particular person or thing, so far will that person or thing be deemed sacred. But this is outward and artificial; it is also false to some of the noblest traditions of the mental freedom of the past. The first Christian community was condemned on the very ground on which later Christian communities condemn their opponents—namely, a lack of reverence for the so-called sacred. Images of the gods of Rome were sacred to the devotees of Polytheism; and the Christians, who recognised no visible emblems of their objects of worship, were strongly denounced for their lack of veneration for that which was then regarded by many as sacred. To-day these same Christians, or their descendants, condemn unbelievers for not reverencing their sacred places and days, to say nothing of the sacred persons whom their religion has invested with undue authority. To us no one day or person, or thing, or institution, can be more sacred than another, except so far as man is benefited thereby. By this it is not meant that a thing, to be sacred, must be useful in the lowest sense of that term, but that it must conduce in some way to the world's good. The beautiful in art, the true in philosophy, the noble and pure in human conduct—these are all sacred, because they are in harmony with the highest instincts of man, and tend to elevate and to regenerate the race. True sacredness does not consist in supernatural power, priestly arrogance, or assumption of authority to our fellow man. Things are made holy by the temper and conduct of him who uses them. Man is his own consecrator, whether in his home, at church, or in the temple of science. Where mind speaks to mind, either orally or in writing, and thus impresses for good; where intellect diffuses its choicest blessings abroad among mankind; where learning and thought rise into higher regions of light and truth; where poetry illumines and art charms; where liberty goes forth breaking asunder the chains of the captive; where knowledge dwells and love manifests its power; where virtue reigns supreme and justice bears the sway—there, and there alone, is true sanctification to be found, encircled in the temple of Reality and enthroned upon the pinnacle of Humanity.

CHARLES WATTS.

AGNOSTICISM v. DOGMATISM.

As the world grows wiser, and, by the aid of increased enlightenment, intelligence, and experience, is better able to investigate the history of the past and to learn the practical lesson that may be gathered from its study, men discover that it is both unsafe and unphilosophical to dogmatise about matters which lie outside the region of actual experiment or positive demonstration. Theories which in times past would have been accepted as truths upon the bare *ipse dixit* of one man are now subjected to the most searching scrutiny by a host of scientists, and must rigorously fulfil all the conditions of logic and be compatible with all the evidence of known facts before they are permitted to pass into law. In this regard each succeeding generation enjoys advantages superior to those possessed by its predecessors, inasmuch as every new discovery and every fresh fact affords additional opportunity for testing the weakness or the strength of the hypotheses upon which their theories are based, and thus renders possible a nearer approach to the truth.

Notwithstanding the indefatigable efforts of *savants* all over the civilised world, the ever-widening field of facts from which their inferences may be drawn, and the bond of brotherhood which makes the discovery of one the property of all, man's knowledge of himself and his surroundings is still so imperfect that it might almost be said to be yet in its infancy, and the wisest know that the most cherished doctrine may any day be shattered at a blow by some unexpected scientific revelation, or by the new light that some unexpected phenomenon may throw upon the laws of nature. The history of science is one long record of errors and corrections ; of crude notions abandoned for theories that, in their turn, were replaced by others deduced from closer reasoning and more perfect experiment ; of fresh discoveries added to knowledge, and which rendered obsolete the ideas of yesterday. Take astronomy, chemistry, physiology, and medicine, for example, and compare the theories concerning them current a few centuries ago with those in favour to-day. Some of them have been totally reversed ; but no one can say that our knowledge on these subjects is yet perfect. Astronomers can only tell us approximately the distance of the earth from the sun ; chemists cannot declare that their "elements" will never be resolvable into constituents ; physiologists have to confess that the functions of certain parts of the human body are still unknown, or but

very imperfectly understood ; and doctors have to admit that for certain diseases they have no cure. If, then, this is the state of the case with regard to physics, that science which deals with things we can see, analyse, dissect, measure, and weigh, how impossible must it be to assert anything as positively and absolutely true concerning those things which are secret and hidden, and which, for want of a better term, are called the supernatural ? Yet it is just about these things that the most emphatic dogmatism prevails.

Agnosticism is the antithesis of dogmatism ; and the Agnostic, guided by the past experience of the world, and recognising how liable to subversion are the most carefully-drawn conclusions, declines to dogmatise upon propositions involving subjects which he honestly and firmly believes to be beyond the grasp of man, but holds his mind receptive for demonstrable facts, and asks for proofs. Orthodoxy is the synonym of dogmatism, and, on questions concerning the supernatural, dogmatises vehemently, but, as she asserts, not without grounds. It is urged that proof is within the reach of all, and we are invited to turn to the Scriptures, and there find the whole mystery explained by divine revelation. Reason is man's noblest attribute, and the utmost exercise of this faculty is enjoined and applauded in the investigation of any matter concerning ourselves and our surroundings ; but its use is denied on the question of the supernatural. In approaching these alleged proofs, Agnostics cannot divorce themselves from this power by which they distinguish the false from the true, the probable from the improbable ; and reason is fatal to the proofs. By its light they are investigated, analysed, and compared—found wanting, and rejected. We cannot help it ; let the cause be what it may, we could not be true to ourselves and profess their acceptance. They do not fulfil one condition that would be demanded by any searcher after truth in any department of science, and our reason and our conscience rebel against them.

Now, granting the most perfect honesty and sincerity of purpose on both sides, where must we look for the cause of this belief and disbelief in two members of the same race ? Clearly in the mind. The minds of men differ almost to infinitude : one will cherish as the most sacred truth that which another will hold in the utmost abhorrence. Take, for example, Catholics and Protestants on the doctrine of Transubstantiation. But man can no more be held responsible for the class of mind with which he has been endowed than he can be held blameable for the length of his nose or the colour of his hair ; and this fact is conveniently ignored by those who condemn Agnosticism and insist upon regarding it as a wilful perversion of the truth.

There are certain things, however, which every sane mind must

accept as infallibly true—*e.g.*, “Things equal to the same thing are equal to one another.” “Two parallel straight lines, being produced, can never meet.” These are self-evident propositions and cannot err, and the Agnostic simply asks that anything he is required to believe shall be reducible to equally plain and simple terms. Theories raised on any other all depend upon an “if,” and the hypothesis only holds good until a better takes its place. Upon this tottering hypothetical particle all the dogmatism of orthodoxy is based, else there never had been change. “If” the New Testament be divinely inspired, it must be infallible; but the New Testament is not infallible (as witness the number of interpolations, forgeries, and unauthentic writings contained therein), therefore it is not divinely inspired. Some hypothesis, then, other than the divine inspiration of the New Testament is required to support the dogmatism of orthodoxy; and it is while this hypothesis, which shall be capable of being reduced to a self-evident proposition, is being sought and found that Agnosticism withholds its assent from those doctrines which treat of subjects beyond the limit and power of the mind of man in his present state of knowledge. We shall be told that we lack faith. True; but faith proves nothing. The ancient Greek had the most implicit faith in his Pythoness, the Roman in his Haruspice, the Jew in his prophet; but this faith made none the more true the ramblings of the oracle, the interpretation of the entrails, or the vaticinations of the Hebrew seers. The peculiar mental condition that is capable of such faith is to be found among all peoples, but in greater degree in ignorant ages and among barbarous races than where the spread of education and the light of science have lifted the veil of darkness from the minds of men, thus permitting them to avoid the snares and pitfalls of priest-craft and superstition.

Few things are more opposed to each other than are the doctrines of Christianity and Unitarianism: each has its devotees, who express the most implicit faith in the saving power of their belief, and are prepared to defend their respective tenets against all opponents. But this faith cannot make them both true. If there is only *one* form of belief that can save mankind, it is clear that Unitarians and Christians cannot both be saved, as the one denies the fundamental doctrine of the other—the Godhood of Christ. So much may be said without charge of dogmatism; but to assert which is right and which is wrong would be to dogmatise. This Agnosticism avoids; and, while agreeing with neither, she condemns neither, but asks from both the same measure of toleration for her views which she extends to all.

A. McDONNELL.

THE POPULAR RELIGIOUS FAITH.

In the present paper we purpose taking for our subject the supposed antiquity of the canonical books of the New Testament, and their descent to us in an uninterrupted succession from the first century to the present time. We are told, and many persons believe it true, that the twenty-seven books of our present New Testament were all extant in the times of the Apostles, were written by the persons whose names are appended to them, and that they have come down to us pure and intact. The converse of this is also believed—that these things can be predicated of no other book besides the twenty-seven which form the orthodox canon ; that no other book was ever accepted by the early Christians, and that no other book was ever admitted into the canon of the New Testament Scriptures. If this could be proved, no doubt it would be a fair and firm argument in favour of the canon. But is it a fact ? The furthest from it possible. From the very first the Christian Church, so far from being united, was more divided than it now is, and the canon of Scripture was unknown till the latter half of the second century. The early Christians agreed upon nothing : the incarnation, the humanity and divinity of Christ, the pre-existence, the reality of the nature of Christ, were all disputed points, which disturbed the Church from the beginning ; and, after these points were dogmatically settled by councils, a similar war of words arose respecting the Holy Ghost. In the fourth century undoubtedly the majority of Christians disbelieved the divinity of Christ and the personality of the Holy Ghost ; nor was there any uniform consensus as to what books should be accepted. As for inspiration, it is a comparatively modern dogma.

By far the largest number of Christians in the early days of the dispensation were Gnostics, composed of a vast number of sects, for all were afterwards called Gnostics who did not agree with the Western Church. Somewhat later rose the Alexandrine school, or neo-Platonists. The Gnostics wholly rejected all the books which constitute our present canon of New Testament Scriptures, and substituted instead the Gospel of the Infancy, the Gospel of Philip, the Gospel of Perfection, the writings of Pachur, the Psalms of Valentinus and Bardesanês, the hymns of Marcos, sundry books of Pachor, Barkur, Armagil, Barbelon, Balsamum, Lensiboras, and so on. These books were, undoubtedly, very ancient, and many, if not all, of them were extant further back

than the twenty-seven books now accepted; and no sufficient reason can be assigned why they are not equally worthy of credit, if antiquity or popularity is to decide the question. The truth is that Christianity, as we now have it, was not born like Minerva, who came into the world of full stature, but was a growth of ages, chiefly concocted by the Roman or Western Church. It was built up by ecclesiastics, who accepted those writings which favoured their own views and rejected those which opposed them. As we descend from the Apostolic times to the four-figure ages, the present "orthodox" doctrines of Inspiration, the Trinity, the Virginity of Mary, the pre-existence, the personality of the Holy Ghost, the gift of miracles, etc., crept in gradually, and, after being rejected by one council, were accepted by another; the Western Church, for the most part, insisting on the "orthodox" side, and the Eastern Church on the "heterodox" side. Of course, the Greek Church would call their views the orthodox; but, as we have received our Christianity from Rome, we mean by orthodox the decisions made on Church questions by those councils which were under the influence of the Roman hierarchy.

Next to the Gnostics in number were the Platonists, who abounded specially in Alexandria. The original Platonists tried to amalgamate Christianity and Platonism. Philo, the father of this system, was contemporary with Jesus Christ himself, and was alive during the Birth, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, and Ascension periods; but a century after the death of Philo a change of front took place in Platonic Christianity. The symbolic or allegorical language of the old school was interpreted literally; thus the phrases, "This is my body" and "This is my blood," which were considered by the old school to be symbolical or allegorical language, by the new school were taken realistically, or literally. This school is called, for distinction's sake, the Neo-Platonic, and those who were disciples of it were called Neo-Platonists. It will be seen in this also how dogmatic Christianity was a growth, and how every change and every development was more and more mystical and ecclesiastical.

The oldest canon of Scripture in existence is the Alexandrian, in four folio volumes, in Uncial characters. The book is in the British Museum. So far from confirming the assertion that all the books which constitute our present canon were universally accepted by the early Christians, and that no other books were admitted into the canon, we find here two Epistles of Clement, and several parts of the present books are omitted. For example, Matthew's Gospel begins with the fourth chapter, "the Sermon on the Mount." All the Gospel of John from chapter vi. 50 to chapter viii. 50 is omitted. The famous *three witnesses* (1 John v. 7, 8) is omitted; so, also, is a large part of

2 Corinthians (from chapter iv. 13 to chapter xii. 6). Comparing our present version with all others preceding it, there are above 80,000 various readings in the different Greek versions.

Looking now to the Fathers who allude to the Christian writings, the first is Papias, who died A.D. 169. He says the Gospel of St. Matthew was written in Hebrew, and was called "The Lord's Sayings" (*Logia*), no doubt referring to a small *brochure* of the parables and moral precepts of Jesus (chapters iv.—vii.). Of Mark he says: "The Gospel which bears his name was composed from Peter's own words." The book from which these quotations are made is called "Five Books of Commentaries on the Sayings of our Lord," and is in Greek. Papias was Bishop of Hierapolis, in Phrygia, and was a companion of Polycarp. He tells us in his preface how he compiled his book. He says: "If at any time I met with one who had conversed with the elders, I inquired of the sayings of those elders. I asked him what Andrew or Peter said; what Philip said; what Thomas and James had said; what John had said; what Matthew had said, or any other of the Lord's Apostles. What they told me by word of mouth have I here set down in writing, and nothing in these commentaries has been taken from books."

Now, Eusebius tells us that Papias was a man of very "limited understanding, and a very credulous chronicler of *unwritten traditions*, who had collected certain strange parables of our Lord and of his doctrine, and some other matters rather too fabulous." This Samuel Pepys of the second century tells us that the *Logia* (or Gospel) of Matthew was written in Hebrew; but no Gospel of Matthew is known except the Greek Gospel. The inference is that our Gospel in Greek is not the same as that referred to by Papias. What he says of Mark is equally perplexing. If Papias, who tells us he made unceasing efforts to pick up every idle gossip of the elders, every iota of information they could give him by personal knowledge or hearsay, never heard of any New Testament Scriptures except a Hebrew *Logia* of Matthew and a Gospel of St. Peter, with 1 Peter and 1 John—if, I say, this is all that Papias could collect by the middle of the second century, is it not pretty certain that nothing else was known by Christians at the time? Papias made it his business to collect every scrap of information which existed on the subject, and this is all he could hear about. The *Logia* of Matthew in Hebrew was most certainly not our Gospel of Matthew in Greek; and probably the Gospel "composed from Peter's own words" is not the same as what we now call "the Gospel according to Mark." As for 1 Peter and 1 John, we have no means of judging whether or not they are the same as those we now possess. It is, however, almost a moral certainty that the "Gospel according to John" was wholly unknown, inasmuch as the omission, in this case, could

not possibly be an oversight. From what we learn by this Bishop of Hierapolis, in Phrygia, the inference cannot be gainsaid that the second and third Gospels, with the Book of the Acts and the Epistles of Paul, were wholly unknown to Christians in the middle of the second century. If wholly unknown to Christians, they did not exist. If they did not exist, they were not written by the persons to whom they are now ascribed ; so that three of the Gospels, at least—those of Matthew, Luke, and John, as we now have them—the Acts of the Apostles and Pauline Epistles, were concocted after the middle of the second century, and, therefore, are forgeries, utterly valueless as documents of authority.

Irenæus tells us that Papias was a disciple of John. Is it credible that he should have known nothing of the third and fourth Gospels? Is it credible that he should have known nothing of Paul and the Acts of the Apostles, if the Epistles of Paul and the Book of the Acts had been extant? John, we are told, died at the age of ninety-four or ninety-six, at the close of the first century. Papias lived at least sixty years later, and yet knew nothing about the twenty-seven books of the New Testament, except that John and Peter had written an Epistle, that Matthew had written the Logia, or Sayings of Christ, and that Mark had written “a Gospel composed of the words of Peter.” Papias was a bishop, was a collector and compiler of everything relating to the Christian Church ; was a disciple of John, a companion of Polycarp, and lived in Asia Minor, where the seven chief Churches of the new dispensation were planted—Ephesus and Smyrna, Pergamos and Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. Without a doubt, he must have known and conversed with some of the “angels” of these Churches ; without a doubt, some of the elders he refers to belonged to these Churches. The Acts of the Apostles tell us that Paul visited several of these places. At Ephesus, for example, was the riot in the Temple of Diana, and to this Church one of the Pauline Epistles is addressed ; but no whisper of these things ever reached the ears of Papias. Hierapolis, the see of Papias, had Laodicea touching it on the South, Philadelphia on the North, Colossæ on the East ; Lydia, with Smyrna, Sardis, and Ephesus, on the West ; but Papias never heard of an Epistle to the Colossians, never heard of Paul’s visit to Phrygia, though he was a bishop in that very province ; never heard of Paul’s travels about Asia Minor ; never heard one word about Lydia, of Thyatira, where Paul and Luke tarried ; or about the soothsaying girl, and the imprisonment of Paul and Silas for exorcising her—not because he was indifferent about these matters, for these were things he sought after diligently. What, therefore, is the inference?—what else but that these matters were unknown in the very localities in which

they are said to have occurred. The Colossians could not tell him a word about an Epistle written to them some seventy or eighty years before ; the Ephesians could not tell him a syllable about the gold and silver smith who set the city in an uproar ; his own neighbours in Phrygia knew nothing about Paul's visit to that province. No Christian in Asia Minor ever told him one word respecting Paul's visits and wanderings about Asia Minor.

The Acts of the Apostles, we are told, were extant in the first century, but in the middle of the second century were unknown by the people most interested in them ! Strange ! passing strange ! Incredible ! wholly incredible ! One inference alone is rational, and that is, that the books were unknown. If unknown, they were non-existent ; if non-existent, they were written subsequently, and were simply forgeries, justified only on the principle that falsehood and forgery, deception and fraud, are legitimate instruments, if by them the Christian Church can be extended or strengthened.

That after Papias subsequent Fathers frequently referred to the books of the New Testament canon is condemnatory, rather than the contrary. It shows that, after the time of Papias, these books made their appearance, and, when extant, were known. In the time of Papias they had not made their appearance, and were, consequently, unknown. From this inference there is no escape. The Gospel of Luke, the Gospel of John, the Acts of the Apostles, the Pauline Epistles, the Epistles of James and Jude, the second of Peter, the second and third of John, the Apocalypse, and the Epistle of the Hebrews were unknown to Bishop Papias, who died A.D. 169. Matthew's Logia, referred to by him, was not Matthew's Gospel ; and as for Mark's Gospel, even the New Version acknowledges that part of it is suppositious. If part is so grossly an interpolation that even the defenders of inspiration and of the canonical Scriptures cannot put their seal to it, who shall tell what the Gospel was like to which Papias referred ?

The whole canon is thus disposed of, and, so far from the twenty-seven books being well known in Apostolic times, none of them (or, at most, two short letters) were known to the Bishop Papias in the middle of the second century. And, so far from no other books being ever admitted into the canon by the early Christians, the earliest known canon contains other books ; the Gnostic Christians rejected all the twenty-seven books and substituted others, and the Alexandrian Christians had other books ; so that the present canon is reduced to the authority of the Church of Rome alone. There it was concocted, and there let it remain.

JULIAN.

A.D. 2500.

ANTIPODEAN AGNOSTICISM: ITS WHENCE AND ITS WHITHER.

CHAPTER I.—ITS WHENCE.

“COME over unto Macedonia and help us!”

Paul, the preacher of a new faith, which, in some of its aspects, when viewed by the microscopic eye of the future, seems almost grotesque, but permitted at that time a more generous development of human action, of more hopes and fewer fears, repeats in his morning sleep, with all the vividness of dream concentration, some daring project of the day; and follows out with more *abandon* than he has yet dared to allow himself the possibilities of his future life in a country where competition will be a little less severe, Rabbinical subtlety and satire a trifle less keen, and where he will be received without demur as an organisation possessing the superiority of King Stork to King Log. Torn, no doubt, by the conflicting strifes of their own indigenous faith, they longed to take refuge in a mind of higher calibre, a mind in which the absurdities inevitable in all things human should be less obvious by being spread over a larger area. They had not read Carlyle about strong men, neither had they the rare opportunity of watching the happy results of acclimatising exotic sovereigns from Hanover; but, in their own way, they had, doubtless, had opportunities of noticing how the petty quibblers and carpers of the day lost their ephemeral *ratio existendi* in the presence of a masculine mind living in an altogether higher plane, sharing with them its moments of intellectual enlightenment, and at other times quietly taking the skeleton out of the cupboard, and sneaking away into the wilderness for a good, long tramp, knocking the poor skeleton quite out of time and troubling.

“Come over unto Australia and help us!”

This time the cry comes to a stalwart English Freethinker, with the strongest opinions on every subject under the sun, and the voice of a Stentor with which to assert them. The cry is from Melbourne, and the apostle no less a person than Mr. Josiah Crimes.

“Come over unto Australia and help us!”

From Sydney this time the cry. It is addressed to an eminent schoolmaster and ecclesiastical veteran, and the proposal is to make him Episcopos or overseer of a branch of the Established Church, which,

having been struggling along in the colony, thinks it would derive vast benefit by a re-illumination from the golden candlestick in the Holy of Holies, Lambeth, S.E. The veteran's name is Dr. Worry, and he takes with him several little Worries, and also a Mrs. Worry.

Notice that, in both cases the cry is for strong men. The school-master was one who looked upon the world as containing so many millions, mostly schoolboys, while Mr. Josiah Crimes was the sort of gentleman who, if you made a blunder, knew well where to find the trigger to explode the world's scorn upon you. In fact, this was the only sort of murder he was at all likely to commit. His name was one of those curious anomalies we meet with in Nature ; and, perhaps, not less inexplicable than a bishop's apron.

And notice that in both cases the cry expressed itself definitively in terms of £ s. d. I know that Paul made a sort of a show of his tent-making business ; but I do not think they wanted many tents on board ship or even at Rome ; and I expect he had to trust a good deal to hospitality, which is, after all, a sort of peripatetic acceptance of tithe in kind.

Well, the bishop packs his Thirty-Nine Articles into his port-manteau, and Mr. Josiah Crimes takes with him not very much, but certainly the resources of a fertile brain, which are like the stars in multitude. The stars included, of course, a due proportion of nebulæ. We most of us are sufficiently aware of the existence of the Milky Way ; but we don't all of us take the trouble, as did Mr. Crimes, to investigate its never-ending milkiness. Pledged once more in Westminster Abbey, "*Jurare in verba Magistri*," Bishop Worry sallies forth triumphantly, while Mr. Josiah Crimes spends the voyage in a compilation of a Freethought calendar. True that Auguste Comte had already, to some extent, done this work ; but he seemed to think that there was no world outside his precious Western Republic ; and it is very well known that he utterly disparaged investigations of the Southern Cross.

Meantime, in Pekin and San Francisco, in Rome, in Utah, and at Mr. Spurgeon's Tabernacle, other strong men, deriving their strength either from heaven or from repeated contact with Mother Earth, working by methods either of induction or deduction, and with a deep sense of the Infinity either of the past or of the future, were girding up their loins. Not one of them but had a capacious brain, knowing a little—a very little—of everything, rather than much about anything. Not one of them but, like Napoleon, was "bored with the old world ;" each one, in Alexander's fashion, sighed for a new world to conquer. And I must not forget to mention that England contributed, as a make-weight to orthodoxy, not only the shamedly-heretical orator aforesaid, not only a Comic History of the Gospel edited by Mr. Spurgeon, but a reader of the

Scriptures according to Mr. and Mrs. Wesley a commentary of extraordinary breadth of view, accounted for by the more than strabismic divergence between the principals who were, it is well known, at daggers' drawn, and used to give and take Caudle Lectures, with a freedom warranted only by connubial intimacy. These all flocked to the land overflowing with mutton and gold diggings; for wheresoever is found the carcase of unlettered wealth and of muscular industry, there, you may be sure, will the eagles be gathered together. He giveth them their meat in due season. Yoke for the bird's babe in the egg, and for stout pinions, for claws that have learnt to clutch, and beaks that are keen to tear, strong meat and tasty carrion.

These Immigrant Synthesists hurtled up against one another like blue bottles in a syrup trap. They helped to form one another's environment; and that, of course, is as much as to say that they helped very considerably to modify one another. Perhaps Mr. Josiah Crimes was affected as much as any one. The Church was so absolutely flabby that there was really no fun in hitting it. Might as well attempt to punish an eider-down quilt. Then there were so many friendly and hospitable souls about, not a few of them actually engaged in the damning employments of law and landowning. And presently there gets to be a home growth of clergy, not nearly so dogmatic and objectionable as the breed in the old country. In fact, it is quite impossible to get up an earnest heavy-weight prize-fight; and it is a very different satisfaction which is got out of a friendly spar with the gloves. The old proportion sum is worked out with the same enthusiastic tediousness as ever—viz., As Toryism : Liberalism :: the Old generation : to the New. More or less on the sly, the little Worries meet the arch expositor of Buddha, who has been imported by the East Indians cultivating the sugar fields of Queensland, and the Bishop's hopefuls incline to the opinion that the dangers of philosophical flirtation have been a little exaggerated, not, indeed, much to their surprise, for has not *père* Worry to keep up the dignity of his position. Then, again, the Mormon element is seen to have its attractiveness and appropriateness in a country where the rabbits set a fine illustration of how, if one had but faith, one's seed might multiply and possess the land, and where the squatters are clearly the analogies of the old shepherd-kings, whose concubines were, we know, in some sort of generous ratio to the numbers of their flocks and herds. There was such a true poetic charm in the notion of a young Australia following in the lines of hoary and played-out Holy Land. Even the Roman Catholics were modified. In this strange country people were always finding out strange beasts, and it was really difficult to say whether some of them were fish, flesh, or fowl. So that the dicta of the old ascetics scarcely seemed to apply

amid these very new circumstances, and, indeed, one daring neologian declared that, as St. Augustine could not have known of the existence of Australia, the Catholic religion must scarcely be considered to apply, except to the world known to the ancients.

In short, here was seen the progress of the heterogeneous towards homogeneity. The unlike substances, shaken up in a bag together, had their angles rubbed off, and began to acquire something like a neutral tint. Out of materials gathered from every quarter under the globe they built up a novelty that the globe had never yet seen—an Australian type of morality and of manners, of dialect as of face.

But, meanwhile, the larger environment was in action. England had raised the Suez tariff, and France, in this way impeded from getting to her new Franco-Chinese empire, not unnaturally reciprocated by blockading Sydney harbour. The Australians failed to see that they had any quarrel with France, and demurred strongly to England's action. An insular patriotism arises, the banks cast in their lots together, and arrange a united Australian loan. The songs of the people, emanating from the Melbourne music-halls, emphasise the popular slang, till it becomes an Australian dictionary, and is greedily devoured in many editions, in spite of the absence of any plot but patriotism. At length a dashing young Liberal, known as the Kangaroo, because of his startling method of political progression, and the extraordinary amount of support he gets from a very large Radical tail, so taunts the old Premier with his miserable Old World prejudices that the latter dies in a fit, and a Kangaroo Ministry is straightway necessitated. Fifty torpedo boats are immediately voted; meanwhile, as they are rather long in coming, Kangaroo invites the French commander to dinner. Between them they arrange that the navy shall retire to make way for a French Ambassador. The English governors have second-class return tickets presented to them, and the Gordian knot is, at last, cut by the New Antipodean Federation.

A generation or two elapses, during which there is an active importation into the island of proprietors of the "true faith," variety *Anglicana*. Confucian missionaries from China, who find themselves unable to worship at the shrines of Venus, of which the French are everywhere encouraging the erection, flock thither; but are themselves slightly heretical on the point as to whether it is necessary to return to the old country for burial. Propagandists from Utah also continue to find a living by suggesting how very desirable it would be to have ten women to one man, instead, as the case is, of one woman to ten men. Ideals are true while they last; and do we not live in ideals? And particularly those of us who are bachelors? But even these Utah missionaries quarrel with the Utah Pope for the time being, because

they persist, and express their intention of persisting, in exporting from Utah their sisters, their cousins, and their aunts, and, in consequence, the State is rapidly acquiring the miserably small surplus female percentage characteristic of Christendom. And so all these teachers of morality and professors of infinite sanctions, as they differentiated from, or, in the vulgar, *quarrelled* with, their old pastors and masters, approached a little nearer to one another, under the influence of that strange spirit of patriotism. But—and this is an important point—they all negotiated Divine sanctions for temporal advantages, herein sharing the common weaknesses of our human nature. Like Carlyle, they all pretended to sell, and in a measure did really sell, Immensities and Infinitudes. True that few of them got as much as £500 a year; but many of them acquired shockingly bad digestions, which made them call out “stone” and “leather” in irascible tones when very innocent and well-cooked fish and other food was presented to them. We shall all agree that the privilege of hearty and seemingly honest abuse is a commodity which may well eke out a smaller salary.

I shall in my next paper endeavour to indicate the circumstances which induced the New Antipodean Federation to start a real home Church of their own after renouncing the mother Church of England, which had renounced the grandmother Church of Rome, which had renounced the great grandfather Church of Abraham, and which, though our genealogy of renunciations is, like other genealogies, a little defective, was itself, doubtless, a very indirect renunciation of some very primitive Church known to the Amoeba kingdom in the days when our ancestors had not yet seen fit to encourage the development of an axis of leverage or backbone.

W. GREATHEED.

MAN: WHENCE AND WHITHER?*

THE fables of the creation of nature and man by various fantastic and ridiculous means, which have, for thousands of years, found favour with the unthinking multitudes inhabiting the earth, and which even now are, one or other, firmly believed by the large majority of both the Eastern and Western populations, must, ere long, gradually give way to the truer and grander theory of Evolution, resulting from the study of the natural sciences. Priests, monks, and other interested people, backed up by the enormous wealth which has accumulated to the various religious creeds during the past centuries of darkness, ignorance, and gross credulity, will, no doubt, oppose all their tremendous forces against the new philosophy, thus, for a while, delaying the inevitable result. But this condition of things cannot last long. Education is doing, and will continue to do, its work, until, at length, falsehood and slavery will give place to truth and liberty.

In order to discover the origin of man, it is necessary to carry the mind back to a very remote period, and observe the mode of development of our planetary system; for, according to the theory of Evolution, there were no starting points for particular forms in nature, the whole universe consisting of one continuous unfolding of phenomena.

The modern theory of the mode of development of our earth, as also of all other planets and suns, is the one known as the "Nebular Hypothesis," which is the prelude to the great theory of Evolution, and which teaches us that the earth, the sun, the moon, the planets, and all the heavenly host are the effects or results of the condensation of a nebulous vapour, which took place many millions of years ago, after having been diffused for an incalculable period of time throughout the illimitable expanse of space. The cause of this nebulous vapour, or attenuated matter, is unknown to us, and will probably ever remain enshrouded in the profound mystery which at present envelopes it. Beyond this limit all is mere speculation or hypothesis; and the Agnostic philosopher and the man of science, humbly acknowledging their complete inability to solve this mighty problem of ultimate causation, are content to leave further speculation in this direction to metaphysicians and poets.

* A paper read on October 20th, 1884, at Channing Hall, and on November 3rd, 1884, at Cutlers' Hall, Sheffield; illustrated with diagrams.

During many long ages this process of condensation of the nebulous vapour steadily continued, being controlled by the laws of gravitation and transformation, until, at length, a number of rotating spherical nebular masses were formed, in a state of high heat from the shock of their recently-united atoms, which spheres gradually cooled by radiation, consequently contracting and becoming possessed of a more rapid rotary motion, giving off from their equatorial regions large rings of vapour, which, in their turn, condensed and, under the influence of the same two laws, formed separate spheres for themselves. This is the mode by which our planetary system was formed, as taught by Laplace and accepted by the scientists of to-day.

The earth, then, in common with other planets, may be said to have passed from the condition of a gaseous to a highly-heated fluid mass, and to have gradually become plastic, and moulded by revolution on its own axis to its present shape—*i.e.*, an oblate spheroid, or globe, flatter at the poles than at the equator, with a polar diameter about twenty-six miles shorter than the equatorial diameter. This is the shape that all plastic bodies which rotate on their axes must assume, as we are clearly taught by mathematics.

Assuming, then, that the earth was in a state of incandescence when it began to take a definite form, we shall at once see that the denser materials composing it would gravitate towards the centre, forming a semi-plastic mass surrounded by an envelope of gases and watery vapour. The gases would be quickly disposed of in various chemical combinations, and the watery vapour would be condensed and deposited in depressions on the surface of the central mass as soon as it had become cooled sufficiently. The outer crust of this central, semi-solid mass was soon converted, under the intense heat, into a hard, granite-like rock, which was continually subject to sudden upheavals, resulting partly from the violent escape of gases, and partly from water passing through fissures on the surface to the heated interior and giving rise to steam of great expansive power. In this manner great inequalities of the surface were, no doubt, produced, whose rugged edges, after the lapse of a vast period of time, were gradually softened down by the subsequent action upon them of air and water. This first rock formation is termed by geologists the Plutonic (from Pluto, monarch of hell), on account of its being the result of intense heat, and not, as is the case with all other rock formations, laid down in layers by water. Whether the Plutonic rock forms a solid centre to our earth is matter of uncertainty; but all are agreed that the internal heat of our planet, whether caused by the friction of the particles of a solid substance or by a molten fluid, is still, even in these later times, intense. In boring through the earth's crust, the average increase in temperature

for every fifty feet of descent, after the first hundred feet from the surface, is one degree Fahr., which would give us, at a depth of 125 miles, sufficient heat to melt most of the rocks. This intense internal heat has generated, in times long gone by, enormous forces, by which rocks of all ages have been raised and depressed, twisted and distorted, broken and forced out of position, and forcibly compressed, so as to eventually cause most important changes of surface level.

The next class of rock-formation is totally different from the Plutonic, or unstratified series, in that it is the result of the wear and tear of the surface when acted upon by air and water, and is laid down, in the first instance, by water, as sediment. Water, in the forms of seas, rivers, rain, and ice, has been the chief agent in the arrangement of all the stratified rocks, the determination of the earth's contour, the direction of valleys, and, in fact, the regulation of the whole physical geography of the visible portion of the earth. With the help of this mighty agent, so soon as the earth had become sufficiently cool to permit condensation to take place in its vapoury envelope, the ceaseless wear and tear of the Plutonic—and, subsequently, of all other—rocks, which has accumulated so vast a mass of material, commenced. Large volumes of water were gradually deposited, without intermission, until permanent seas and rivers had become established, and the new process of stratification, which was henceforth destined to shape the crust of the earth and to provide the conditions of life, commenced to operate. This action is taking place daily in rivers and seas, as we may observe at any time. On the tops of mountains the same action is in operation, though under different conditions, snow and ice splitting fragments from the rocks to be borne away as grit into the valleys by impetuous torrents and deposited in other places. Within the Polar circles ice on a grander scale is levelling down the land; glaciers, covering thousands of square miles, are slowly sliding down the valleys, grinding their surfaces still deeper—forming sands, clays, and gravels, and forcing these down to the sea-shore; and icebergs, many miles in circumference, are carried by currents along coasts and against cliffs like huge ploughs, completely altering the face of the rocks beneath. This wear and tear results in the formation of immense quantities of detritus, which is deposited in layers at the bottom of seas and rivers, and consolidated by pressure, being frequently assisted by lime, iron, or silica as a cement. The coarser-textured rock has been laid down in rapidly-moving, shallow water; and the finer-textured in still, deep water. Thus, through many long ages—probably millions of years—the surface of the earth underwent continual change from the constant deposition of stratified rock, each layer of which completely buried beneath it the various life forms of the previous period, which circumstance enables

us to ascribe to the various members of the animal and vegetable kingdoms particular geological periods ; for fossilised remains of animals and vegetables have been unearthed in the different layers of the stratified rocks, conclusively proving their existence on the earth at those periods.

HERBERT JUNIUS HARDWICKE, M.D., F.R.C.S.

(To be continued.)

SHELLEY AND SOME OTHER POETS.

It has been said, and I think with some show of truth, that genius dies when it doubts, since then it loses faith in itself. But, yet, there is a form of doubt which underlies a purer and nobler faith than that which it questions. Such was that of Shelley. The eloquent speech of Talford, in vindication of this great genius, is not likely to be forgotten, and it does honour to the memory of that noble man who was himself a poet of no mean order. Thomas Wade, in some admirable verses, calls the Pantheistic poet the most eloquent of all his tribe, for—

“No human verse is eloquent as thine.”

This may be slight, but very pardonable, exaggeration. For no one, can doubt that there is rich eloquence in the sweet, delicate, and yet passionate pages of the author of “The Cenci,” that magnificent tragedy which no living dramatist can hope to rival. The eloquence springs from the deepest recesses of the soul, and is grand and sublime though lacking the rhetorical skill and polish of Byron. It is fervid, intense, and spontaneous, bursting forth like a thunderstorm. Shelley was a wonderful genius, greater than Keats, Coleridge. and Byron, by a long way ; yea, greater than any that this nineteenth century has produced, save Goethe. With a magnificent imagination, revelling in the infinite, Shelley may claim precedence over all but the great epic poets in sublimity and ethereality : in this latter quality he is “himself alone.” Shakspeare, who was Homer, Dante, Goethe, Socrates, Milton, and Bacon in one stupendous whole, was himself a less ethereal genius than

Shelley. In "Epipsychidion," that most exquisite piece of passionate Platonism, the poet exclaims :—

" My Song, I fear that thou wilt find but few
Who fitly shall conceive thy reasoning,
Of such hard matter dost thou entertain ;
What if by misadventure chance should bring
Thee to base company, as chance may do,
Quite unaware of what thou dost contain,
I prithee comfort thy sweet self again.
My last delight : tell them that they are dull,
And bid them own that thou art beautiful."

Was this vanity or egotism ? It would have been so in a second or third-rate poet, or, in point of fact, in almost any one but Shelley. But in his case, no. Considering his great genius and his untimely death, it looks like a kind of plaintive prophecy. And we close the book with a sigh of sadness, exclaiming : " Yet it is true." Where has Tennyson, where has any living author, written like this ?—

" The world's eyeless charioteer
Destiny is hurrying by !"

Shelley died at the early age of twenty-nine—died in life's early summer. His sun went down while the morning was yet fresh.

The only fragment of a poem written within the memory of this generation equal to Shelley was the glorious "Hyperion" of Keats. What vastness, what sombre grandeur, is there in this colossal verse ! It is worthy of Milton, or even Homer. Byron himself said that it "was something great" in that satire of satires, that marvellous but Mephistophelian poem, "Don Juan."

Shelley, Byron, Keats, Coleridge, and Wordsworth were all living at the same time. What a galaxy of genius ! Since the era of Elizabeth no such five men have been found together. Within a few years of that era there were Goethe, Scott, Schiller, and Burns. Is there any man living to day who can stand by the side of those and not feel himself lowered by half a head ?

Descending somewhat from these altitudes, let us linger over a pleasant and genial prospect to say a few words on female talent. Mrs. Shelley, the daughter of Mary Wolstonecraft and Godwin, wrote "Frankenstein," a wonderful work. Godwin's "St. Leon" does not surpass it. This was the lady's *chef-d'œuvre*. Except George Sand, it is questionable whether any woman has written so powerful a scene as that where the monster comes to life. But here, while speaking of George Sand, I cannot help expressing my appreciation of her wonderful genius as displayed in "Spiridon." This is a book of many books—nearly bare the soul—a book of great genius, to be pondered on for

years. The spirit of the ages is embodied therein—a mighty and a terrible revelation. Yet it is not for all to fathom ; its depths are too profound for the shallow and the superficial. Mrs. Browning apostrophises George Sand in the memorable lines wherein she designates her

“A large-brained woman and great-hearted man.”

Mrs. Browning stands at the head of female writers of poetry. She is at once ideal and spiritual. She is well worthy of her name—worthy to rank with a husband equal to any of his contemporaries. Elizabeth Barrett Browning is but a very little below some men who make an era. Without challenging for her a position equal to Chaucer, Spenser, Jano, and Petrarch, she may, at least, be compared with Southey, Thomson, Gray, and Landor. Can more be said of any poet among us? Some women have succeeded in writing good and successful plays : a great one in point of poetry and power never. There is not in existence a single drama by a woman equal to Knowles's “*Virginus*” or Talford's “*Ion*.” Joanna Bailie's productions were greatly over-rated. They will bear no comparison with Westland Marston's beautiful “*Philip of France*,” one of the best plays of modern times ; and there is no question whatever of their inferiority in all the essentials of good writing. Joanna was greatly admired by Scott (who thought that her poetry was superior to that of Thomas Campbell) ; but novelists are often bad critics.

Female genius is assuredly most resplendent in acting and singing, for Betterton and Garrick could hardly have been greater than Mrs. Siddons.

We began with Shelley, and to him we will return. “*The Cenci*” is one of the most marvellous productions of this century, and was written at an earlier age than “*Hamlet*.” Dr. Westland Marston called its teaching “the divinest Scepticism.” Shelley, like Lucretius—

“Denied
Divinely the divine.”

Beatrice Cenci is the greatest female character found outside of Shakespeare. It cannot be acted because of its very greatness.

GREGORY GREYMORE.

REFORMERS.

THE abuse of the great prominent reformers has been very prevalent throughout the history of humanity. For a little while they have helped the progress of the race ; for a little while their words have been remembered, their example has been influential, and men have suffered themselves to be moved to purer thoughts and nobler actions ; intelligence and morality have taken a step forward, a decided step ; just a glimpse is caught of a glorious future for mankind towards which this is a distinct movement ; and then superstition suddenly lays hold of the reformer and changes his character, and, lifting him out of his sphere, places him upon a pedestal, where he shall be beheld by wondering multitudes ; and thus it supposes that it can do him honour and increase his influence. What *has* it done ? It has destroyed him as a power over the thoughts and feelings of men because it has destroyed him as a *man*. It has made him beautiful perhaps, but powerless ; and thenceforth he becomes a mighty impediment in the way of the progress of the very work he initiated. So it was with Buddhism. The contrast is very striking between the elaborate mummeries connected with the religion of Lamaism to-day—the latest development of Buddhism—and the gentle life, the practical righteousness, the sound moral precepts of Gautama Buddha. In the one case we have beneficent influence and exhortation to goodness, and earnest endeavour to “set rolling the royal chariot wheels of a universal empire of truth and righteousness,” with a view to the cessation of human sorrow. And in the other case we have the name of Buddha, a name to conjure with ; the religion of Buddha, a thing of useless ceremonies, and corrupt and mischievous faith, a system full of that which degrades manhood and is fatal to both large intelligence and liberal morality. Who would recognise in the Jesus used to intimidate and coerce, to persuade and cajole, as a weapon of retaliation and an easy method of salvation, as an obstacle in the way of progress, as the great disintegrator of society, and destroyer of the grand idea of brotherhood, the poor Jewish carpenter boy who simply wanted to awake in the hearts of those about him more brotherly love ? Superstition has destroyed the simple religious Jew, and made him the excuse for and the object of unmanly and disgraceful idolatry. And so it has been with all reformers. For, as Mr. Freeman said with reference to Edward the Confessor, “when a man is once canonised his acts and

his character immediately pass out of the reach of ordinary criticism ; religious edification, and not historical truth, becomes the aim of all who speak and write of one who has been formally enrolled as an object of religious reverence." And with this pious misrepresentation of facts there is a corresponding abuse of the reformer and destruction of his utility.

The use of the reformer is *not* to settle the thoughts of all future generations, *not* to fix customs and ceremonies so that they shall never change. This is a mischievous work to do, and where done results in intellectual and moral impotence and death. Stagnation is death. The real use of the reformer is to take a step which shall be an incentive to others to step still further, to disturb the stagnant waters, to shake up the sluggish thought, to upset the fixed opinion, to break up the established mode of thinking, believing, living, and introduce some new element or force that shall ultimately pave the way for still further changes and modifications. The great value of the reformation effected in men's thoughts of the universe by the discoveries of Magellan and Columbus was that it could not remain where it was : it was bound to be followed by still further discoveries, geographical, astronomical, and so on, all of which still further tended to establish human intellect upon its rightful throne, and to overturn the usurper that had tyrannised so long over the minds of men. These men would not have been reformers in any real and valuable sense if they had simply substituted one conception for another, though the substituted conception was the more true. Martin Luther would not have accomplished much if he had simply struck an effectual blow at Roman Catholicism, and put another superstition almost as gross and bigoted and tyrannical in its place ; and indeed to us at this date it would seem as though there was little to choose between the doctrines of Catholicism and the doctrines of the two great founders of dogmatic and conservative Protestantism. But Luther did a work of which he never dreamed ; for, as Mr. Lecky has pointed out, "in estimating the character of that great movement we must carefully distinguish between its immediate objects and its ultimate effects. The impulse of which it was in part the cause, and in part the consequence, at last issued in the diffusion of a rationalistic spirit which no Church, however retrograde or dogmatic, has been able to exclude. The essence of that spirit is to interpret the articles of creeds by the principles of universal religion, by the wants, the aspirations, and the moral sentiments which seem to be inherent in human nature. It leads men, in other words, to judge what is true and what is good, not by the teachings of tradition, but by the light of reason and of conscience." Such a movement entitles him who initiated it to the name of reformer.

John Hampden, in his refusal of a forced loan to Charles ; in his refusal to pay the ship-money ; in his bold reply to the question then before the country, Whether the King should be stripped of some of his power or the people lose their liberty ? was one of the chief initiators of a movement that has not ceased yet ; for the reformation could not remain where it was left at that day. The way was paved for acquisition of still more rights and still greater liberties. We have never since stood still ; even now we are engaged in conflicts, and winning victories that are the logical issue of the work done by the reformers—of whom John Hampden is a worthy example. By such men have our liberties and rights been achieved, because they did not establish bondage for bondage or tyranny for tyranny, but recognised and worked for the universal recognition of a principle which should be the soil from which should grow still nobler fruit to the people's good and advantage.

Many a reformer whose name is revered hundreds of years after his death, whose name is borne proudly, perhaps, by a party or a sect, has failed entirely to accomplish a worthy mission because his followers have used him to establish conservatism. They have killed his spirit while they have preserved the letter ; they have destroyed his influence while they have perpetuated his precepts. And many a reformer has accomplished his mission who has been forgotten. He has sown seeds that have yielded in later generations a rich harvest ; and men, while gathering the harvest, have forgotten the sower of the seed. But those are the real reformers who do not live to paralyse and destroy, but, so to speak, die to resuscitate and revivify and inspire. If we could gather up to-day all the force of all the reformers of the past, and who have been misrepresented, abused, made to serve unworthy causes, or forgotten, and bring it to bear upon the ignorance and injustice and evil of to-day we should wield a power that nothing could resist, and effect a reformation the results of which would never pass away ; for inestimable has been the loss of intellectual and moral force the world has suffered—the force of original founders and reformers misunderstood and sacrificed ; the force of the followers misdirected and squandered. The world cannot afford to lose so much. It needs it all. The intellectual and essentially religious movement of to-day is in the direction of the destruction of the superstitious reverence which has caused this loss, and of the conservative dogmatism based upon it ; and the establishment in its stead, *not* of a creed which shall express the thought of to-day and be a curse to posterity, but a wise use of the past, an intelligent appreciation of the advantages of the present, and a patient labour for the future, characterised by modesty and staunch fidelity.

F. SYDNEY MORRIS.

NOTES AND SCRAPS.

DESPISE not a strict—even a reputedly strait-laced—upbringing in matters pertaining to religion. Our own Puritan faith, now far behind, has been, upon occasion, much to us every way, and is unforgettable. To quit it cost us much; and, though we believe ourselves to have attained a larger hope, we doubt if from a school of thought less noble than that of Calvinism we should have so patiently endeavoured to find our better choice. A gentler faith might have begot in us an ignoble contentment and a careless sloth, which years would have increased.

If any man have not, at least, respect for “that country from whence he came out”—namely, the faith of his childhood—his return to it may, on that account, be less probable; but he is as likely to revile Agnosticism when he leaves it, in turn, on the spur of the moment and on slight occasion. No man worthily leaves his early faith without pain; and the pain he has endured, if it be real, should seal his lips against anger or scorn. Of a lost faith every one should speak and think as tenderly as of a lost friend.

If a man tells us he is an Agnostic, we are glad if, together, we can find points of sympathy and agreement. But we do not dispute his title to call himself an Agnostic because we may chance to differ. We may be wrong—he right; and we search and look into our own heart accordingly. But one thing we wish to know, and have a right to demand, of any such new-found friend—his antecedents. Whence comes he—from what household of faith or of unfaith? What has he surrendered in order to become an Agnostic?

Secularism calls to present insistent duties only; but its philosophy, joined with Agnosticism, is deeper than this. The plainest of creeds, belief in “the now,” is the profoundest of all. Yet, as in craft mysteries, the novice scarcely knows more than the names of the symbols—symbols open and eloquent to those who have passed the sublime degrees—so there is a sense in which the Secularism of the educated and that of the uneducated greatly differ. The former is largely tinged with diffident reserve; the latter inclines to the effrontery of Materialism—after all, the ‘prentice theory of Nature. A spade is a spade only in the estimate of the vulgar.

It is a singular fact that pure Atheism, of all thought systems, should have progressed the least. Other opinions have made advance, found new ground, improved themselves by struggle, and shaped themselves anew. Only the Atheist stands still, as if to move were to court

destruction. Nothing issues from his lips but the dull *No*, as if an ill-mannered rustic's answer. Yet this very Atheist is fain to borrow an assertion from you, by way of loan, in order that his denial may take effect upon it. His negation can only strike fire on the prepared surface of Theism.

The ordinary reader has, as a rule, more patience with one whom he calls a *plain* thinker, like Comte, than with a magnificently-dowered mystic such as Swedenborg. The former, the vulgar think and say, is more natural. Is Nature—material nature—then, so plain? Is it all surface work, even in the visible universe? By analogy, a “natural” thinker should, of all men, be the most profoundly and grandly mysterious, speaking a language known only to the few, and those the initiated.

Blind prejudice, popularly fostered, and, as it were, nourished by itself, is often harder to bear than wilful, intentional misrepresentation. There is a dull, purblind force in simple misapprehension, which tells more gallingly than any criticism, however acute. As Agnostics we have much to suffer in this respect: much which should, however, nerve us to more unsparing effort. To style Agnosticism the religion of indifference—the school of thought affected by the cultivated idler—is the pet reproach against us of the unthinking. To urge the unthinking to think is always a worthy task: may we do so by recommending such persons to consider, if only for a moment, that, now-a-days, it takes more of intellectual effort to decline identification with popular religionism than to echo its creed, and that the declinature is not yet accompanied with much *écclât*?

Mr. J. Ick Evans writes from Toronto that Agnosticism is making remarkable progress throughout Canada. “Toronto and Montreal already possess two powerful Organisations, and these,” adds Mr. Evans, “together with other Societies about to be started, will produce a wave of propagandism of the Gospel of Scientific Freethought in Canada that will awaken the thoughtful men and women of the Dominion to high and noble resolves.” Mr. Charles Watts has accepted an invitation to deliver addresses in the United States and Canada expository of Agnosticism, and thus far his tour has been a brilliant and uninterrupted series of successes.

The proposal to establish an Agnostic Temple in the South-Western district of London is being favourably received, and a meeting in furtherance of the movement will be held at Loughborough Hall early in January. Those who are willing to assist, pecuniarily or otherwise, are invited to communicate with Mr. Charles A. Watts, 17, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

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A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF LIBERAL THOUGHT.

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"Agnosticism simply means that a man shall not say he knows or believes that which he has no scientific grounds for professing to know or believe.....Agnosticism says that we know nothing of what may be beyond phenomena."—PROF. HUXLEY.

"I think that generally (and more and more as I grow older), but not always, an Agnostic would be the more correct description of my state of mind."—CHARLES DARWIN.

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THE AGNOSTIC.

FEBRUARY, 1885.

THE CONFESSION OF AGNOSTICISM.

SOME MISCONCEPTIONS.

WILL no one, in a happy moment of inspiration, bestow upon us some new and better name? At present we are called Agnostics, and our teaching is called Agnosticism: the latter a word hopelessly unfamiliar in the people's ears, and difficult of pronunciation post-prandially; one, moreover, of which the distinguished inventor probably repents. Some title more fitting might surely be found.

It is in connection with a passing query such as the above that the utter emptiness of our present labelling system suggests itself. The question of the modern Athenian is not, What is the new thing of the day? but, What is it called? And the verdict he delivers depends upon the name—that is, the stamp or label affixed to the novelty—and not upon the reality itself, the inward part or thing signified. How foolish, for example, the attempt to class men mentally, as if in herds or flocks, with a set of distinctive brands and ear-marks! “Why not simply be a man?” as William Maccall suggests, and neither Positivist, “Pantheist, nor Pot-theist,” in the words of Carlyle's oft-repeated witticism. Agnosticism might well exist without a label. We think that ours is the intellectual position least in agreement with parochial distinctions. Call it, if you will have something of this kind, by some lordly name which recalls not the sect, the split, or the schism. Call Agnosticism the life of the living, the faith of the faithful, the hope of those not hopeless, the Creed of Existence.

Our Agnosticism (thus named in default of a better title) suits common life and common thinking best, for this reason—that, less than any other thought system, does it lead us away from the actual. It is Materialism etherealised. Were it not that the phrase, “Religion in

Common Life," has been elsewhere appropriated, it would describe our position with some clearness. To use it now would be but to court misapprehension. That philosophy which is closest to our toil and to our recreation, to our waking and sleeping hours, is, of all, not the most natural, for that way mystery lies, but the most homely, the most sincere. "Closer to us than breathing, nearer than hands and feet," is, to us, that inner learning, at once our daily guide and our transcendent revelation.

It is at this point that we are most commonly and most grievously misunderstood. In the first place, the majority of thinkers favouring us with their attention never seem to understand how it is that philosophic Agnosticism can be anything more than a merely momentary attitude of mind, or mental gesture rather—one so transient as to be undeserving of serious notice, much less of laboured explanation. Their view may be thus illustrated:—I am shown an experiment in physical science, with a certain and, to me, inexplicable result—an explanation of which is, nevertheless, demanded from me. Process and result being, however, alike uninteresting and unprofitable to me, tending also seriously to distract my attention from other important pursuits, I say, in reply, that "I do not know," and turn away to resume my interrupted tasks. In the momentary attention I thus devote to the experiment in question, and in my indifferent comment upon it, I am certainly, for the time being, an Agnostic. Again, in the somewhat more serious and prolonged investigation usually directed to the problems of existence, and in the fact of my being baffled in any attempt to explain them, I am again Agnostic, for the time being, once more—for the time I devote to the investigation. But if, in both cases, I be content, ultimately, to turn away from the study and "give it up" for ever, surely, from that moment of turning, the Agnostic attitude disappears. After assuming it for a longer or shorter time, my Agnosticism may obtain no longer. Thenceforward, and by consequence, I may be, practically, a Materialist, concluding perhaps that, as I do not know and cannot tell the secrets of the universe, they may be non-existent or purely imaginary. Just as women are accustomed to say, in regard to the mysteries of masonry, from which they are debarred, that there is no secret at all, and that the reason for the professedly effectual concealment is that there is nothing to conceal.

That is the first misapprehension concerning Agnosticism, and the second is like unto it; for as, in the former case, one indifferently ignores or forgets next moment the mystery which for a time engaged attention, the latter, more praiseworthily, strives to withdraw its gaze from the unsolved difficulty by renewed and increased endeavour in connection with the so-called plain and verifiable "facts" around,

under the stimulus of past defeat, and almost with a feeling of relief. In this way we constantly find Agnostic apologists employing the insoluble enigmata as a kind of spur to secular effort, saying in effect that, since it has been finally ascertained that such things are beyond our powers, let us by all means, and for that reason, apply ourselves the more diligently to the work of the moment.

Agnosticism proper has neither part nor lot with either of the above theories. Both of them, however prefaced, are, in the end, resorts to simple Materialism. To be worthy, Agnosticism must endure to the end, from the time of its adoption. And the duties of the hour should require no external fillip to urge their due performance. Their own plain insistency ought to be at once the provocative to and the reward of their discharge.

For what is the "work of the moment" so sedulously pressed upon us as the prime necessity? Is it something wholly matter-of-fact, engrossed in the pursuit of which a man may safely conclude that he is on the known and verifiable side of life, far removed from aught that may cover or hint the Unknowable? Unquestionably the task of the hour lies before us, to be worthily undertaken and completed, or to be ignobly neglected. But not the task *alone*. There is something more. The vulgar know not of it. The informed admit it. Even Materialism has not yet learned to utter that eternal falsehood of its own without blenching. It equivocates; admits that there is a mystery somewhere; not here—on the other side of the grave, and in the skies perhaps, or at some other convenient distance. Even if pressed, it will not confess, although it dreads, that here and now the intellectual foothold is perilously uncertain. Its own feet seem planted with some firmness on the solid ground. But overweening confidence has always been the snare of the sons of foolishness.

There is no greater mistake than to suppose it possible to dismiss, as the *only* unknown quantities in the Equation of Life, such questions as that of the future existence, the beginnings of life and its issues, and questions of that class. There is no dividing line strongly drawn between the known and the unknowable, by keeping on one side of which we may be free from eager questionings in regard to the latter. It is vain to withdraw all attention from the future and the past, hoping to find the present free from any glamour or shifting light which may betray the spiritual: no more deadly delusion than the idea that the past and the future hold all secrets between them, and that the present is wholly an open page. Already, before us, around us, and in us, the unknown is spread. Why, it may be asked, should the hour of death—the death of the body—preface, necessarily, the great discovery, or any discovery at all? Why should that dark spirit, who shall visit every

one of us but once, have power to make us wise as gods with his cold kiss? It is a poetic fancy, baseless as that which sets inquisitive minds to cross-question the underlying noumenon, hoping for the answer which never comes. Wherefore should it come? What assurance seek these questioners—what reply, in whisper or in thunder, from out the darkness? Our kingdom is of the visible and the invisible world that now is: our inheritance now is nobly twofold. Therein lies the third difficulty in the way of those trying to understand our position. This prime tenet of ours, that all things are twofold, if not manifold, is, to the many, utter foolishness, though based upon the common sense and consent of the competent. Doubters will grant us one world; but, inasmuch as the other we postulate lies, not over the wandering sea, not in the regions of celestial space, not beyond the grave, but in, around, and through the present, they will not believe it, probably for that most insufficient of all reasons, that they cannot see it.* In this respect the perversity of this generation is not without excuse. The priests and prophets of the past have always separated, by time and space, the spiritual kingdom from the earthly. Everything has conspired to enforce the falsehood that *here* is the temporal and seen alone; *yonder*, always at a distance, the unseen and eternal. Faith and sight have ever been divorced. The sublime Eastern philosophies have affirmed that man is the mote in the ray of the Eternal—the dew-drop ready to slip into the shining sea; but, be the speculation never so ethereal and prophetic, it is lacking in one essential, the strong foundation, deeply laid within the seen and felt. When, on the other hand, we seek for the firm secular basis, hoping to find a stately superstructure built upon it, a truncated Babel-tower alone is to be seen, with no proud summit upon which the clouds are resting—no glistening spires to pierce the earth-mists of our lower vale. Thus it is that modern thinking men, accustomed to the half truth alone, cannot readily comprehend a consistent and connected whole, even when offered them in all honesty.

These are some of the difficulties in the approach to our Agnosticism. Let us hope that none of them will be found insuperable. Were wilful misrepresentation banished, much of our conflict would be over. Perhaps one other subtle, though unconscious, enemy may yet be cited. Unwittingly, the present writer may have given him occasion for rejoicing. The choice of terms in the discussion and

* Perhaps this is too strongly put. I had much rather understate than overstate the injudiciousness of those who differ from me. But it is impossible to forget that a recent essayist, upholding the crudest Atheistic Materialism, actually thought himself to have scored a point in asking the naïve question (older than himself), in regard to the Deity he denied, "*Where is he?*" Most of us will recollect the sublime, classical answer.

recommendation of Agnosticism is not an easy task. To many readers, the words here employed may seem strange in their new connection—may appear to echo, more or less distinctly, thoughts which, to most of us, are either in the past alone or are associated with much that is foolish and vain. With Landor, “I hate false words, and seek, with care, difficulty, and moroseness, those that fit the thing.” Do these, in spite of my efforts, seem to hint either of Supernatural Religionism or of a Debateable Land professedly traversed only by those calling themselves Spiritualists? If so, it cannot be helped. Neither Spiritualism nor Supernaturalism has any copyright that I am aware of in the terms they respectively employ. That reserve which we, as Agnostics, maintain in regard to the Unknowable is most easily and readily described, in contrast with the material, as *spiritual*: the word-name is indifferent, yet here not inappropriate. But it may be a relief to those who are easily alarmed to be informed that Agnostics do not necessarily profess acquaintance with familiar spirits of any grade or hue, and that there is no necessary connection between that other-world of ours, so near to every one of us, and the cheap mystery ready to reveal itself at the bidding of a “medium.”

G. M. McC.

(*To be continued.*)

HERO-WORSHIP.

A RAY am I of the Eternal Light ;
 Of the Eternal Light thou art a ray,
 My brother ! Why should, abject, ray adore
 Its kindred ray ? We travel evermore
 Back, thou and I, to the Eternal Day,
 Whose mystic garment is Eternal Night :
 Streaming ecstatic from God's deepest breast,
 Or, weary, tortured, darting to God's rest,
 All things, all beings, equal are, and all
 Obey Necessity's instinctive call.
 What is not little and what is not great
 In the outflowing and inflowing Fate ?
 Man should not worship man, but in the strife
 Of atoms sanctify as music Nature's life.

WILLIAM MACCALL.

HERBERT SPENCER'S PHILOSOPHY: AN EXPOSITION.

II.

"FIRST PRINCIPLES."

RELIGION AND SCIENCE: THE ALIENATION.

NATURALLY, "First Principles" divides itself into two parts—the first dealing with the Unknowable, and the second with the Knowable. The Unknowable embraces five chapters, and treats (1) of Religion and Science, (2) of Ultimate Religious Ideas, (3) of Ultimate Scientific Ideas, (4) of the Relativity of all Knowledge, and (5) of the Reconciliation.

All these subjects are of transcendent importance. We should, therefore, study them with a little less bias and a little more reverence than is ordinarily found in the pulpit. We should examine them with all the care, but without any of the credulity, of the devotee, casting aside all that would obscure the vision and all that would warp the judgment.

For 200 decades Religion and Science have been sworn foes. For twenty centuries they have been in relentless conflict. Perilously near to the heart of Science has perpetually gleamed the drawn dagger of Religion, and above the head of Religion has perpetually hung the Damoclean sword of Science. The dagger is, at length, growing rusty; but the sword, untarnished, is still suspended by the same single hair.*

What has brought about this melancholy relationship? That Religion is always divine and Science always diabolical is now an established theological dogma. Contrariwise, that Science has all the truth and Religion all the error is an equally well-established scientific axiom. How has this unfortunate state of things come to pass? Spencer supplies the answer: "An unceasing battle of opinion, like that which has been carried on throughout all ages under the banners of Religion and Science, has, of course, generated an animosity fatal to a just estimate of either party by the other. On a larger scale, and more

* Those who would fully realise the true nature of the struggle between Religion and Science should study carefully Dr. Draper's "History of the Conflict Between Science and Religion."

intensely than any other controversy, has it illustrated that perennially significant fable concerning the knights who fought about the colour of a shield of which neither looked at more than one face. Each combatant, seeing clearly his own aspect of the question, has charged his opponent with stupidity or dishonesty in not seeing the same aspect of it; while each has wanted the candour to go over to his opponent's side and find out how it was that he saw everything so differently." "In proportion as we love truth more and victory less, we shall become anxious to know what it is that leads our opponents to think as they do."

If, in this momentous battle of opinion, we are to discern accurately whether Truth takes sides with either party, we must take sides with Truth—that is to say, we must not take sides at all. From the dust and the heat and the anger of the tumult, we must retire to a high mountain apart, there to contemplate, with impartiality and serenity, the conduct of the combatants in the valley at our feet.

Speaking generally, the facts which are most obvious to everybody are just those which are recognised by nobody. One of these facts is, that in things evil there is a germ of goodness. Another is, that *in things erroneous there is a germ of truth*. When a belief is ultimately shown to be grossly at variance with established knowledge, the belief is thrust aside with scorn or with hatred; and, in the heat generated by this friction, not a solitary inquirer asks what gave to such an error the colour of truth. Yet there must have been something; and this something was the correspondence—a very hazy correspondence, perhaps, but still a correspondence—between the belief and some experience of the believer. Not even the wildest rumour, not even the craziest notion, could originate in nothing. It must have had a source; and, in almost every case, its source is discoverable. But, even if the belief cannot be traced to an actual event, it is certain that it must have originated in an actual event, otherwise this absurd misrepresentation of the event could not have existed. "Though the distorted or magnified image transmitted to us through the refracting medium of rumour is utterly unlike the reality, yet, in the absence of the reality, there would have been no distorted or magnified image."

To beliefs which have flourished in many ages and in many lands, to opinions which have swayed mighty races and vast continents, this proposition applies with double force. The presumption that a given belief is not wholly false gains in strength as its adherents gain in numbers and intelligence, and as the area over which it is spread gains in size. Granting, as we must grant, that life is not possible except through a certain agreement between beliefs and facts, between internal convictions and external circumstances, it follows that the chances are always

in favour of the truth, or of the partial truth, of a belief; and this is especially the case when such a belief is held by many minds in common.

Let us, then, accept frankly the general principle that in erroneous opinions there is a nucleus of truth, even though it may be disguised and disfigured by very much that is false. Such an acceptance will save us from many of the pitfalls into which, otherwise, we might stumble. It will rescue us from that philosophical coxcombry which declares that our own beliefs are entirely right and the opposite beliefs entirely wrong, and which is fatal to the formation of correct judgments. On the one hand, it will save us from the common blunder into which the bulk of the unthinking fall when they permit their opinions to be moulded by the mere accident of their existence at a given time upon a given spot of the globe's surface; and, on the other hand, it will save us from the opposite, but equally common, blunder of wholesale and scornful negation, into which most independent thinkers fall. Maintaining this judicial state of mind, let us contemplate the two sides of this bitter and fierce controversy between Religion and Science—a controversy which has reddened the pages of history with a ghastly red, and which has blackened the sunshine of existence with a hideous gloom.

When candidly accepted and completely realised, the principle that there is a soul of truth in things false will lead us to suspect that the various forms of religious belief which have outlived the criticisms of centuries have all a foundation in some ultimate truth. "Judging by analogy, the implication is, not that any one of them is altogether right, but that in each there is something right more or less disguised by other things wrong. It may be that the soul of truth contained in erroneous creeds is very unlike most, if not all, of its several embodiments; and indeed, if, as we have good reason to expect, it is much more abstract than any of them, its unlikeness necessarily follows. But, however different from its concrete expressions, some essential verity must be looked for. To suppose that these multiform conceptions should be, one and all, *absolutely* groundless, discredits too profoundly that average human intelligence from which all our individual intelligences are inherited."

To this general reason may be added many particular ones. Among these special reasons perhaps one of the strongest is derived from the universality of religious ideas; for religious ideas of some sort are, practically, universal. It will, of course, be urged that there are many tribes without any theory of the origin of things, without any name for a supreme being, without any conception of a hereafter;

and that such notions are the concomitants of advancing intelligence. Granted. But this contention, so far from invalidating the argument, serves only to enforce it. The contention proves that, in divers ages and in various countries, "like conditions have led to similar trains of thought, ending in analogous results." That "the innumerable and varied, yet similar, phenomena presented by all religions are fortuitous is a proposition too absurd to be entertained for one moment.

A second special reason is found in the fact that among numerous primitive peoples religious ideas have had an independent genesis. The doctrine so long and so vehemently asserted by the school of dogmatic negationists, that all creeds are priestly concoctions, is fast losing ground among rigid thinkers. It is altogether untenable. We cannot, without shaking our fists in the face of universal history, maintain that, among all peoples, of all times and of all degrees of development, certain persons in each society have, designedly and with malice aforethought, conspired to cheat the rest, and to cheat them in ways so much alike. Nor can we, without flying in the face of Philology, allege that, at the dawn of the world's day, before man was scattered over the earth's surface, some "primitive priesthood" invented some "primitive fiction"—a fiction which has since become a fact. Philology proves clearly that the dispersion of mankind took place before there existed a vocabulary which could include the names of any religious ideas.

A third special reason is furnished by the perennial vitality of religious ideas. Amid countless changes of appearance, under constant inconstances of form, certain elements of religious belief remain, defying the finger of time and mocking the demon of destruction. Decade after decade, generation after generation, century after century, the St. Georges of criticism have gone on slaying the dragons of theological dogma; but the fundamental verity underlying all these dogmas has emerged scatheless and erect. National creeds, that lived and moved and had their being in absurdity and corruption, have fallen into discredit and decay; yet, Phoenix-like, the ultimate conception of which these creeds were the vile embodiments has been resuscitated, and has flourished. And times out of number has this process been repeated.

All these considerations unite in showing that religious beliefs have their source in human nature, and are derived from "human experiences, slowly accumulated and organised."

But many will argue, with much plausibility, that religious ideas "are products of the religious sentiment, which, to satisfy itself, prompts imaginations that it afterwards projects into the external world and, by-and-bye, mistakes for realities." This solution, however, is no solution at all. It merely throws the problem a step further back. It

religious beliefs are produced by the religious sentiment, by what is the religious sentiment produced? Here is a sentiment which, in all historic times, and probably in prehistoric times, has exercised a tremendous influence over mankind, and which still plays a prominent part in the every-day life of the world. To say that our philosophy can give no rational account of the genesis of so profound an attribute is to confess that our philosophy is, so far, unphilosophical. The only supposition which withstands all the shots of adverse criticism is the supposition that the religious sentiment, in common with all other sentiments, is the result of a process of evolution; and that, like all other faculties, it must, in some way, tend to the welfare of humanity. Admitting that this feeling has grown out of the accumulated modifications caused by the contact of the human organism with its surroundings, we are bound to treat the sentiment with respect. Let us, then, throw away that hot-headed antagonism which, while it magnifies the errors that envelop every religious belief, blinds us to the truth that underlies them all.

There is another important consideration which must not be forgotten. Scientific information, no matter how broad and how deep, can never be co-extensive with human thought. At the farthest stretch of discovery, there must always be something undiscovered. No limits which we may set to space can exclude the idea of space beyond our limits; and no solution of the problems of existence can be profound enough to exclude the question, What is the solution of this solution? "Hence, if knowledge cannot monopolise consciousness, if it must always continue possible for the mind to dwell upon that which transcends knowledge, then there can never cease to be a place for something of the nature of Religion; since Religion, under all its forms, is distinguished from everything else in this, that its subject-matter is that which passes the sphere of experience."

Thus, however irrational, however vulgar, however disgusting to the moral sense, are all the current religious creeds, we must remember that, hidden deep in this mass of decaying rubbish, there lies a pearl of great price. What we have to do is to discard the dirt-heap and to discover the pearl.

From a defence of Religion against Science we now pass to a defence of Science against Religion. Speaking of a defence of Science looks like showing disrespect to the equator. But a defence of Science is not less necessary than a defence of Religion. Just as there are persons who, sick of its absurdities and horrified at its crimes, cherish a disgust which neglects the fundamental verity underlying Religion; so there are persons who, remembering the unceremonious quietus which Science

has given to innumerable theological tenets, have an unutterable dread of what it may do to the beliefs that remain.

When we thoroughly grasp the truth that Science is merely another name for ordinary information made exact, we shall see the foolishness of regarding it with aversion. As it is impossible to say where common knowledge ends and Science begins, it is impossible to reject Science without rejecting all knowledge. To be consistent, we cannot repudiate the broadest scientific generalisation without repudiating along with it the narrowest fact of common life. If we accept the lowest development of intelligence, we are logically bound to accept the highest. Let us see.

The most rabid theologian will not discern anything diabolical in the observation that in June the days are longer and the nights shorter than in December; that in winter the sun rises later and sets earlier than in summer. Yet, if we say that the sun is another world, and that in the azure dome of heaven there can be discovered no golden throne, the same person hurls his anathema at our heads and lights his fagot at our feet. How is this? Surely it is no less scientific to assert that the sun is a world than to assert that the sun does not set at the same moment in each day all the year round! Both observations come within the range of Astronomy, and the science of Astronomy is simply an extended and an organised mass of such observations. Take another case: "That iron will rust in water, that wood will burn, that long-kept viands will become putrid, the most timid sectarian will teach without alarm. But these are chemical truths: Chemistry is a systematized collection of such facts." It is exactly the same with every other science. To declaim against Science and to be consistent, we must declaim against every form of knowledge.

"To ask the question which more immediately concerns our argument—whether Science is substantially true—is much like asking whether the sun gives light. And it is because they are conscious how undeniably valid are most of its propositions that the theological party regard Science with so much secret alarm. They know that, during the two thousand years of its growth, some of its larger divisions—Mathematics, Physics, Astronomy—have been subject to the rigorous criticism of successive generations, and have, notwithstanding, become even more firmly established. They know that, unlike many of their own doctrines, which were once universally received, but have, age by age, been more frequently called in question, the doctrines of Science, at first confined to a few scattered inquirers, have been slowly growing into general acceptance, and are now, in great part, admitted as beyond dispute. They know that men of science throughout the world subject each other's results to the most searching examination, and that error

is mercilessly exposed and rejected as soon as discovered. And, finally, they know that still more conclusive testimony is to be found in the daily verification of scientific predictions and in the never-ceasing triumphs of those arts which Science guides."

Hence we find that Science has unimpeachable credentials. To regard it with hostility is an act of utter folly, equalled only by its utter irreverence. To fail to discern the ultimate fact which underlies Religion is to be very short-sighted; but to fail to see that Science is a mass of facts is to be stone-blind.

An impartial examination, then, compels us to admit that on each side of the controversy there is truth. "And, if both have bases in the reality of things, then between them there must be a fundamental harmony. It is an incredible hypothesis that there are two orders of truth in absolute and everlasting opposition." There is but one order of truth, expressed in two forms. Science and Religion do but show us opposite sides of the same fact. The near side, the front, is shown by Science; the distant side, the back, is shown by Religion.

Having found reasons for believing that Religion and Science will ultimately coalesce in some truth common to both, we have next to discover what that truth is. That it must be a general and not a special truth is evident from the nature of the case. It cannot be a religious dogma, such as that of the trinity or that of propitiation. Science takes no cognisance of them; they are outside its jurisdiction. Nor, on the contrary, can it be a scientific truth, such as some fact in Algebra or in Geometry. Mathematics belongs not to the sphere of Religion, and Religion can recognise no mathematical truths. Just as no belief within the domain of Religion can, under any conditions, become a scientific truth; so no truth within the domain of Science can, under any conditions, become a religious belief. It follows, therefore, that the truth which is to unite Religion and Science must be one common to both; and a truth which is common to both must be a highly abstract fact. It must, indeed, be the ultimate fact in human intelligence.

What that fact is we shall endeavour to indicate in another paper on "Religion and Science: the Reconciliation."

IGNOTUS.

THOUGHTS FOR OURSELVES.

THERE are two methods by which a special attitude, philosophical or religious, may be at once explained and recommended to a circle of readers. The first is by enumerating the various reasons for its adoption—its innate reasonableness, its depth and comprehensiveness, and the extent to which light is thereby shed at once on the history of the past and the questions of the present hour. In this first respect the cause of Agnosticism has not wanted apologists in the past, and is not likely to be without them in the future. The second method will attract and interest fewer minds: it is not calculated to make proselytes; rather does it tend to confirm those whose sympathies are already enlisted on our side, and thus to win respect and confidence from (more than to convince) those who are given to distrust and to oppose us. The former is the invitation specially addressed to those without—the latter the exposition for those within—our pale. Our present words take the latter form.

Agnosticism has been "wounded in the house of its friends" times out of number. Viewing some current definitions of its nature and scope, one is tempted at times to ask if the words employed are really intended to apply to the subject, or whether, by some printer or publisher's error, "*The Sum of Saving Agnosticism*" has not been mixed with some other treatise in the binding, and the pages strangely transposed. Agnosticism is broad and deep, but it has its limits; it cannot include everything. An Agnostic does not, necessarily, object to vaccination, nor is he committed to any particular conclusion in regard to the population question, although some persons apparently think so. Anything vehemently "destructive" (in the slang of religious controversy) ranks itself, by a kind of malignant destiny, under the Agnostic flag, as if Agnosticism pure and simple were directly "destructive" at all. Materialistic theories have not been slow to shelter with us, as if a declaration of nescience in regard to the problems of being necessarily implied the acceptance of something called Matter as, indeed, the mother of us all. Persons with peculiar views on all sorts of subjects, and riding a stud of limping hobbies, company with us gladly, until we have been compelled, in self-defence, to draw attention to the parting of the ways. And, as every one of these friends is supposed to have gained a complete acquaintance with our intellectual view-point in a very limited time, and to be yearning

to proclaim the same to the world at large, it is not to be marvelled at that the definition afforded of our Agnosticism has been, at times, confused and contradictory. For this we cannot hold ourselves to be blameable. There is no recognised Agnostic communion with which we are acquainted; and, if any person chooses to call himself an Agnostic, no one that we know of has any right to deny him the title. Yet it is but fair that those who take our name and profess our position should conscientiously confine themselves, while doing so, to the subjects with which we are concerned and the views generally accepted as belonging to Agnosticism proper. Yet every man's Agnosticism may be regarded as different from his neighbour's, in some degree. Every allowance must be made, in estimating the Agnostic views of another, for the various colourings which they are apt to take from the persuasion which has preceded their adoption. No man can clothe or uncover himself mentally at pleasure. Whether he will or not, a remnant of the old belief will cling to him through all the changes of his intellectual course. He will accentuate a point here, or dwell lightly on another there, of his new persuasion because of some former predilection, some long-forgotten leaning, still, unwittingly, his own. His very mode of thinking, the way in which he apprehends or examines a statement, is not that of his new, but of his former, type of conviction. Would that this freshness, this piquancy of mental accent, were all that we received from some of our Agnostic recruits! For it we were thankful; nothing is further from us than a desire for tame uniformity, dull agreement, consent born alone of slothful thought. Some, however, bring more with them than we desire. They bring us, in many cases, their former creed—not to be enlarged, vivified, and made new by that larger hope to which they come, but solely in order that they may, at their own leisure, and for our supposed edification, turn and rend it in our company.

Now, Agnosticism contradicts no creed which has seemly expression, save by implication; and its method of doing so is that which is most gentle. It but dissipates, by soothing counsel, the terrors of an illusive dream. It seeks to dispel the nightmare vision imaginatively woven round the future; but it has no harsh word for the dreamer, no coarse and foolish abuse to pour upon the subject-matter of the dream. Persuasively, Agnosticism reasons away the fear and dread prevailing in the perturbed mind. Although—

“Death stands above us whispering low,
We know not what into our ear”

it is our mission to impress.

“Of his strange language all we know
Is, there is not a word of fear.”

But a word unworthy in connection with a faith newly left, an allusion barbed with intent to wound, a sneer at that which is, or was once, to another thrice-hallowed, is beneath us and beneath our Agnosticism. Language is the instant handwriting of the soul—indelible here and hereafter. The word thus written remains. Practically, a jest, a scurrilous word, at the expense of another's faith, is a heinous offence. It is meant to be—and gains its object in being—offensive. There is a reserve of sacredness in every faith, however lowly. The sanctity is proportionate to the depth of intellectual conviction with which it is held. With this sanctity no man intermeddleth. For ourselves, we see no reason, no excuse, for the neglect of this prime ordinance of cultivated thought. Criticism may be keen; but there are limits to criticism, which have been invariably respected by the informed and educated. Comment may be keen, but should, nevertheless, be courteous. That any man should dream of renouncing his religious belief because of ridicule, or from the fear of it, is scarcely credible. Such a convert would not be worth the cost of his conversion.

Agnosticism, again, by its very nature an admission of infinite possibilities, becomes dogmatic when exclusive of any possibility in particular. Yet some (in their own opinion) Agnostics do not hesitate to pronounce a definite conclusion in regard to matters on which faith itself is not assured. Granted the conclusion is negative on one side and affirmative on the other; but the negative conclusion is one which Agnosticism should shun.

Of course, it is not intended that, because every one of the problems of being is necessarily in suspense and matter of incertitude, every theory may shelter under that remote chance (one out of many) of proving true in the end. Nothing being necessarily true in this connection, no cover is thereby afforded for believing any particular solution as the one possibly correct. Truth and falsity, and the mean between them, which we meet with reserve of judgment, are matters to be determined by the nature of the problem at issue, the weight of evidence adduced *pro* and *con.*, and the possibility of determining upon that evidence, if adducible. But the operation of the law of probabilities, in such instances, cannot be admitted.

H. DUNDAS.

THE POPULAR RELIGIOUS FAITH.

SECOND PAPER.

It is said by Christians that, if you want to know the truth of their religion, you must go back as far as possible to primitive times, and the nearer you can get to apostolic days the more sure you may feel that you are right. The first four centuries are very highly valued for Christian evidence. The first two stand still higher. And the first century, called the apostolic times, is a sure foundation, in which perfect confidence may be placed. If the tenets and Church discipline of this century could be restored, we should have doctrines, dogmas, and discipline, to which no gainsayer could make exception or hint a doubt. We purpose to follow this rule in the present paper, and see what were the tenets of Christians in the first century; after which we will, with the Editor's permission, extend our inquiry through the three succeeding centuries, taking it for granted that the nearer we get to apostolic times the nearer we get to the truth of the matter. We fancy that many of our readers, not well read in ecclesiastical history, will be not a little surprised at the revelations which will be unfolded before them.

Of the supposed history contained in the first five books of the New Testament we shall say nothing in this place. That was the time of seed-sowing, the time of laying foundations, when we must not look for fruits or edifices. The Acts of the Apostles closes A.D. 63, and within the next seven years Jerusalem was a heap of dust. Titus had taken the city, and one stone was not left upon another. Thousands died of famine, thousands were slain by the sword, and thousands more were sent into captivity. It was a time of desolation and great mourning. Those of a superstitious nature said it was a judgment of God, because his own elect people, whom he had himself taught by Moses and prophets, had forsaken the faith and gone after other gods, three gods instead of one; although they had been told over and over again that the "Lord thy god is one god," not three gods; and although the whole book of Judges was a book of judgments on their forefathers for forsaking the right ways and running into the ways of error. Captivity after captivity, for forty years or more, was sent in chastisement of their sins; then the long Babylonish captivity, and now a severer chastisement was sent on them, even the overthrow of their city and the destruction of their beautiful temple. They had forsaken the God to which Moses had directed them; they had abjured the dispensation so

minutely given them by the God who never changes, nor knows even a shadow of turning, and now that God had forsaken them and given them up to their enemies ; nor would they ever be received back again till they returned to the faith of their fathers, and honoured the laws and rituals so minutely given by his servant Moses. Such, we say, would be the natural and obvious inference of the religious Jews at the destruction of their holy city. They had forsaken the God of their fathers, and the great I AM had forsaken them.

It is from this point we shall begin our investigation. Just before the destruction of Jerusalem the whole body of the Church of Jerusalem (says Eusebius, "Ecclesiastical History," iii. 5), "under command of a divine revelation, migrated to Pella, beyond the River Jordan." Let us follow this Church, which had James the Less, apostle and brother of Jesus (Gal. i. 18, 19), for its first bishop, and Simeon, the brother of James, for his successor (Eusebius iii. 11). These Christians, therefore, were apostolic converts ; were ruled over by apostles ; and were watched over especially by the Holy Ghost, who warned them to flee from the wrath to come, that the good seed might not be lost, and the pure, unadulterated faith might survive the dispersion consequent on the destruction of the holy city. If we can but learn the nature of the creed of these Apostolic Christians, we shall know exactly what the Apostles taught, and what the Holy Ghost set his seal to as the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Happily, we have a good knowledge of these Christians, and are not driven to guess-work, as we are respecting almost everything connected with the Church of the first two centuries. These refugees from Jerusalem were what we call Gnostics. Not a very definite term, we allow, as all who differed in any way from the Western Church in the fourth and subsequent centuries are nicknamed Gnostics by Western ecclesiastical writers ; and, hence, all we can gather from the name is this, that these Apostolic Christians were deemed heretics by the Western Church ; or, to put the same in other words, that the Western Church differed in doctrine and discipline from these primitive and Apostolic Christians, built up by James himself, the first Bishop of Jerusalem ; and delivered from destruction by the direct guidance of the Holy Ghost.

The special charge laid against these Christians of Pella by the Western Church was that they were Nazarines, or believers in Jesus of Nazareth, a charge brought against Paul also by his accuser Tertullian (Acts xxiv. 5). Of course, there was something behind these words. The Western Church insisted that Jesus was the Son of God, and the charge against these Christians was, in reality, that they considered him to be a native of the village of Nazareth. In other words, they believed him to be the son of Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth, and his wife

Mary. This certainly was the prevailing, though not the universal, belief of the first four centuries. Even Constantine the Great and his Queen were Arians. Artemon, quoted by Eusebius (v. 25), affirms that "all preceding Christians, even the Apostles themselves, were of this belief, and taught it everywhere." He adds that this "was taught as the true doctrine up to the time of Victor, the thirteenth Bishop of Rome, who died A.D. 202, when it was corrupted by his successor, Zephyrinus." Artemon died A.D. 210, and could not fail to know the doctrines held by Christians in his own lifetime. He is called a heretic by the Western Church, as the Christians of Pella were called heretics; not because they did not believe the truth, the Apostolic doctrines, and the dogmas of the primitive Church; but because their creed differed from that of the Western Church some 200 years afterwards. It must never be forgotten that heresy by ecclesiastical writers belonging to the Western Church does not mean heretics of the truth as it is in Jesus, but heretics of the scheme laid down by the Western Church, especially by Athanasius and Chrysostom in the fourth century. Theodotus, of Byzantium, being charged with Atheism, because he denied the God-head of the "man Christ Jesus," replied: "No, I am no Atheist. I believe Jehovah to be the one God; but I do not believe the 'son of a man' to be God. If, as I believe, and as the Apostles taught, Jesus was the son of a woman, how is it possible he should be God, the Creator of that woman?"

The refugee Christians of Pella accepted none of our canonical Scriptures; but they did receive the "Logia" of Matthew in Hebrew. This "Logia" was a book containing the moral sayings and parables of Jesus. It is supposed to be the same as the Gospel of Matthew from the fourth to the seventh chapter; but this *brochure* they *interpolated*; that is, they introduced other sayings and parables not in the original compilation, and then called the "Logia" the Gospel according to the Hebrews. Of course, the first three chapters of our Gospel according to Matthew formed no part of the "Logia," and, even if it had done so, would have been cut out by these Christians. As for Paul, they looked on him as an apostate, and utterly scorned his Epistles.

This, be it remembered, was the first Christian Church, the Church of the Christians of Jerusalem; the Church presided over by James the Apostle and the "Lord's brother;" the Church so carefully watched over by the Holy Ghost as to be warned by a special revelation to flee from Jerusalem, as its destruction drew nigh, that it might keep alive the original and true faith. If any Church knew the truth, it must have been these Christians; and these Christians believed Jesus to be only a human being, the son of Joseph and Mary. They believed nothing of all the memoirs (whose name was legion) of Jesus and his ministry

circulated in the first two centuries ; and as for the Epistles of Paul they threw them aside as the heresies of an apostate. The ecclesiastical writers of the Western Church denounced these Apostolic Christians as heretics ; but, in so doing, they included, of necessity, the Apostle James, his brother Simeon, and the Holy Ghost likewise. But it may well be asked, Which were more likely to know the truth, these primitive Christians of the first Church, in the first century ; or men like Chrysostom and Athanasius, in the fourth century—men obviously differing in doctrine from the majority of Christians, men obviously with a crotchet, men who were founders of a new school of divinity, far more theoretical, mysterious, and priestly than the original Church, taught and trained by James and his brother ?

Why, look ye, suppose men living 300 years hence were to affirm that Ireland, in 1884, was a separate kingdom, with its own Parliament, and that Parnell was King of Ireland at the time ; and suppose they were to say that the *Times* and all the other London dailies of the present year were supposititious, and their statements about Ireland were false and unauthentic, what would be said of this charge in the year of grace 3,000 ? “Preposterous !” would be the one and only answer. “The men living at the time must have known better than those living 300 years after the events recorded. There could be no motive for the London dailies, at the time, mis-stating current events ; and, even if they did, no one would have believed their statements, and the papers would soon have sunk into the oblivion of waste-paper. The historians living 300 years later may have had a motive in denying the truth. They may have had a wish to exalt Ireland and Mr. Parnell ; but, as far as historic truth is concerned, there cannot be a doubt that those living in 1884 must have known about the current events of the time better than those living 300 years later.” Apply this argument to the Christian Church : the Christians trained by the Apostle James, and guided to Pella by the Holy Ghost in the year 70, must have known better what the Apostles taught and the Church believed than Roman ecclesiastics 300 years later ; and it is no less than preposterous for these Roman Churchmen to give out that they knew better than these Apostolic Christians did ; that their *ipse dixit* was orthodoxy, and the teaching of the Apostle James heterodoxy ; that the Apostles were quite wrong in talking about “the man Christ Jesus,” and calling him the son of Joseph and Mary, seeing he was the “son of God and the creator of the world.” If Mary was his mother, she was a pure virgin, born without sin, the mother of God, and wife of the Holy Ghost. Chrysostom says so, Athanasius says so, and those who believe otherwise are heretics and cannot be saved. As for the Christians of Jerusalem, they were heretics. James taught them heresy, and the Holy Ghost

ought to have known better than to have sowed such bad seed—seed no better than tares, and fit only to be gathered into bundles for burning.

Heretic and infidel are nasty words to be cast into one's teeth. Why? because they imply gauchery. A heretic or infidel means one out of religious "society," one tabooed by the upper crust, one out of the swim, a publican among pharisees. The words have only a society meaning, and may shift to any of the four points of the compass. Jesus and his Apostles were heretics and infidels in the eyes of the Jewish sanhedrim. A Jew is a heretic and infidel in the creed of a Turk. A Buddhist is a heretic and infidel in the eyes of a Brahmin. The Anglican Church is heretical in the belief of a Catholic. But in every case the heretics and infidels turn the tables on their slanderers. So, after all, orthodoxy means only society doxy, the fashionable doxy of any locality for the time being. In Druidical England the mythology of ancient Rome was heresy. In the Roman period the worship of the Scandinavian invaders was heresy. When Augustin came to Kent he was a heretic to the Anglo-Saxons. After the Reformation, Protestants were the heretics to the older Church party. And if in the year 2,000, or any future period, the truths of science are acknowledged by the leaders of society, then Calvinists and Lutherans will be the heretics of the period.

With this interpretation of the word, the Apostolic Christians of Pella had no need to wince at being called heretics by the Western Church in the fourth century and subsequently; for the charge did not mean that they did not hold the truth, but only that they disagreed with Christians of a later period, who had been able to force their own views on the leaders of society. All reformers are heretics; all men of progress are heretics. Excelsior is only Heresy new writ.

JULIAN.

THE AGNOSTIC.

THE PRIEST'S WARNING.

Dost long for sunrise?—quench the vain desire,
And bar thy window 'gainst the eastern fire.
Thy fathers dwelt content in sacred night ;
Walking by faith, they scorned unholy sight :
Then, reckless gazer, close in shame thine eyes,
And hide thy head, while morn illumines the skies :
Wrapped in Egyptian gloom the truth receive,
Lest haply thou shouldst see—and disbelieve.
The shapes of night, with outlines faint and blurred ;
The sounds of night, in soft confusion heard ;
The scents of night, that come from flowers unknown—
Were they not sweet, and were they not thine own ?
And he who could not rest might see the stars
And moonlight beaming through his prison bars ;
Yet blest is he who sleeps, for morning takes
These tender glories from the eye that wakes :
Yes, he who sleeps is blest ; in holy dreams,
Through day and night he sees the same fair beams.
Come, dream again ; or, if thy lawless mind
Have seen the sun, and can no more be blind,
For eyes profane as thine the daylight keep,
Nor wake the sainted souls who yet can sleep.
Yon murderer, cheered with sacramental wine,
Has higher hopes and holier thoughts than thine.
'Tis merciful to hang him, for perhaps
His convalescent conscience might relapse :
Shall new-purged eyes behold that loathsome cot,
That hideous home, where love and health are not ?
Shall hands new-cleansed caress that cowering wife ?
(Poor wretch, who knows not yet the loftier life !
Blighted and scarred, grown dull of heart and eye,
Mother of starveling children, born to die.)
What if the fiend, with seven more vile, returned,
And banished all the truth, so quickly learned ?
Yet has he passed the mystic second birth,
Prepared for heaven, though quite unfit for earth.

Straight from the gallows shall his spirit fly
 To join the white-robed company on high,
 Despatched in mercy to the heavenly shore,
 To kick his wife, to kill his friends, no more.
 But *thou*, though pure thy deeds, though kind thy heart,
 In God's free grace canst have nor lot nor part ;
 Thou, by unhallowed thirst for truth consumed,
 With thieves, and cheats, and liars shalt be doomed :
 Thy foes thou pardonest ; but thy heavenly Sire
 Tortures his own with everlasting fire.
 Just Ruler ! when we strive the truth to win
 A false conclusion is a damning sin :
 If unto thee a crooked pathway leans,
 That glorious end may sanctify the means ;
 But, if the straightest path should from thee tend,
 The means can never sanctify the end.
 Presumptuous man ! be humbled in the dust !
 We are the Church of God, and he is just.
 Cling to the Cross, renounce thy fruitless search ;
 Better be deaf and blind than leave the Church.
 Pluck out thine eyes, lest they should see too clear ;
 And lest thine ears mislead thee, cease to hear.
 Better, a sightless cripple, save thy soul,
 Than enter fires of hell, though sound and whole.
 Prove sacred things by faith, if proof they need ;
 But prove not those which war against our creed ;
 Or, if thou follow Reason's polar star,
 Turn back in time, nor follow it too far.
 From many a distant, night-encircled tomb
 Comes forth an ancient voice, a sound of doom.
 The thorn-crowned ages cry : " Return, return,
 In haunts of death the way of life to learn.
 Ah, wherefore pine and struggle to be free ?
 For what has liberty to do with thee ?
 Thy fathers wore their fetters to the grave ;
 Then why shouldst thou disdain to be a slave ?
 Round every limb they wreathed the golden chain,
 And what thou deemest loss they counted gain.
 Wilt thou be free ? then Christ is not thy Lord :
 Wilt thou be true ? let Hell be thy reward !"

C. N.

THE UNSEEN ORACLE.

THE celebrated Valley of Life was a region marked by strange and varied features. Travellers who passed through it were often tempted to call it the land of contradictions. Some of its spots were wondrously beautiful. Winding streams flowed with melodious ripple through pastures of bright emerald green. The herds browsed peacefully beneath shady oaks and pillared beeches. The soft showers left no trace but the glittering drops in the grass and the rainbow towards which the peasants lifted their gladdened eyes. But the Valley presented other and sadder scenes. There was a desolate waste where the pale midnight stars looked down upon the bones of the victims of the simoom. There was a place still more desolate, though full of the bustle of men; for there the people groaned under the oppression of a harsh government. Round the council board of that city sat the dread figures of Greed, Vice, and Disease. Sometimes a terrible mania seized the citizens, and they made the earth tremble with the fury of their civil wars. Sometimes a melancholy darkness obscured the landscape, and the plague would do its fatal work in every household. The dead were buried by torchlight, and a ghastly silence fell upon the city, only broken by the yell of the suicide.

The Valley was overlooked by Theology Mountain, the summit of which was wreathed with clouds. Its sides were exceedingly rugged and difficult of ascent, except in one direction, where it was approached by a broad smooth road, usually known as the Highroad of Faith, but by some called Credulity Way. This road presently conducted the wayfarer to the portals of the Palace of Revelation. The structure covered an immense area, and was considered to be as magnificent as it was extensive. The architecture was of a mingled order. The oldest portion was severe and even rude. Its corridors were gloomy. Its apartments were hung with worm-eaten tapestry, on which were woven representations of battle, murder, and sudden death. In the armoury were stored suits of rusty mail and instruments of torture. The newer additions, however, were more florid in character, and almost concealed from the spectator the frowning aspect of the ancient battlements. Domes and fretted spires rose high in the air, all glorious with gold from the famous Land of Promise, and supported by columns and arches, built of marble obtained from the isles of Dogma and Authority. The marble was dazzling white, and of a most massive appearance; though the initiated had been heard to say that, when struck, the

columns gave out a hollow sound. The Palace was under the guardian care of a numerous caste, or Priesthood, who regulated the whole economy of the vast building. There were picture-galleries for popular instruction, containing paintings of marvellous events in past ages, such as fire descending from heaven, resurrections from the dead, and the like. There was a staircase leading to the Celestial Banqueting Hall, which was declared to be of unrivalled grandeur. In the opposite wing of the Palace sightseers were shown a mysterious door, from which, when left ajar, noisome fumes and stenches were emitted. But, of latter years, this door, which it was whispered led down to Hell Dungeon, was generally kept closed. One chamber above all was preserved sacred. It was the Holy of Holies, the awful presence chamber of the King, whose omnipotence and benevolence were the theme of all the priestly courtiers. The King never showed himself to his subjects. There were, indeed, traditions of his having appeared in the Valley in various forms; but that was a long while ago. He remained in majestic seclusion, a Hidden Oracle, whose will and counsel were communicated to the faithful as they knelt upon the prayer-mat before the impenetrable veil. When the afflicted and heart-broken folk from the Valley came to the Palace with the story of their wrongs, "The Healer is there!" replied the warders, and raised their hands solemnly towards the Hidden Oracle. Then the sons of sorrow dried their tears, and went back—to their sorrow.

There was a Priestess named Humanity. She was a woman of surpassing beauty, which increased with the years. As a little child she had made the Palace her playground, and looked up to its guardians with a passionate love and reverence. But Time had brought three children to her, Reason, Charity, and Justice, and as they grew her ardour diminished, and her service was less eager. Her heart was yearning after the people of the Valley. Many a time she and her children stole in secret to the wilderness or the city to cheer the oppressed, to point the sick to comforting remedies, to teach the ignorant wisdom, or to dig wells in the thirsty desert. As gleams of prosperity, induced by her happy labours, passed across the Valley, the Palace warders commanded the inhabitants to render praise to the Invisible Monarch, from whom all blessings were dispensed. The obedient people brought incense and sacrifices and gold and silver. But Humanity received nothing. Now, Reason was the Priestess's first-born son. He was the apple of his mother's eye, comely, daring, and of a proud but noble spirit. He resented the neglect his mother suffered. He despised the venal courtiers. He suspected their assertions. He searched the dark nooks of the Palace and the caverns of the Mountain, and horrified his mother with tales of blackened skeletons and mutilated bodies which

He had discovered secreted in the vicinity and precincts of the royal residence. His sister Charity trembled like a leaf. His sister Justice bade him renew his quest. The youth began openly to throw discredit upon the Priests' pretensions, and to assert his mother's claims to gratitude and honour. With angry words and knotted scourges they at length drove him from the Palace threshold. Reason strode scornfully down Credulity Way, and went out, empty-handed as a beggar, haughty as a prince, into the wide, wide world.

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Years had passed. The day of vengeance had arrived : a day of turmoil, a day of wild agitation. Reason was returning with a band of the men of the Valley at his back. They had learnt how much they owed to Humanity, how little to the Unseen Oracle. They had come to rase the Palace to the ground. The Highroad of Faith was blocked by a motley host of enthusiastic retainers of the Court, armed with antiquated weapons. The invaders chose another route by the toilsome track of Doubt. The Priests mustered to the defence of the narrow path, headed by Fashion, Prejudice, and Bigotry, all mighty men of valour. There was hurrying to and fro, there were shouts of despair, and victorious huzzas. The troops of Reason swept towards the Palace, hewed down the thick-ribbed gates, and thundered up to the dread sanctuary of the Veiled Monarch. A piercing cry of horror rose to heaven from the lips of the conquered Priests, as the veil was rent in twain from top to bottom. Even the victors held their breath. Reason and his companions peered with amazement into the interior of the chamber. It was a void, a vacancy unutterable, indescribable. They stretched forth their hands, and knew only that they were standing on the edge of a great gulf. They heard nothing ; they felt nothing ; they saw nothing. They were simply conscious of a weird, immeasurable expanse, beyond and below. One bold soldier, named Atheist, threw a pebble in and listened. No sound, no murmur, no echo. "There is nothing there," cried Atheist. His twin brother, Agnostic, had covered his face with his hands in silent awe. Now he lifted his head, and said gently, "Who knows?" Then he beckoned them all away, and they slowly left the spot.

As the old edifice smoked and roared in a great conflagration, the crimson light shone upon a group in the Valley, so fair that the multitude, in gazing at it, forgot the blazing pile on the Mountain of Doom. Humanity, with radiant eyes, was seated between her daughters, weaving flowers into immortal garlands. Charity and Justice rested their golden tresses on her lap. Reason, with his drawn sword point downwards, stood behind them, calm, fearless, and supreme.

F. J. GOULD.

MAN: WHENCE AND WHITHER?**(Continued.)*

IN the Plutonic or unstratified rock-formation period there was, of course, no life upon the earth, the conditions necessary for such development not being present ; but in the very earliest of the stratified formations we find evidence of the dawn of marine life, both vegetable and animal. Geologists have divided the stratified rock into three chief divisions, the Palæozoic (ancient life), or Primary ; the Mesozoic (middle life), or Secondary ; and the Kainozoic (latest life), or Tertiary. Each of these, again, has been subdivided into smaller sections, according to the particular kind of deposit met with, the particular places where the best examples are to be found, or the particular life-forms existing. The Primary, the depth of which is unknown, is subdivided into seven periods—viz. :—

Laurentian, consisting of highly metamorphosed (that is, changed in appearance from the original stratified rock character, owing to its proximity to the molten Plutonic rock) limestone, containing fossil remains of the Foraminifera, some of the first living organisms.

Huronian, consisting of less highly metamorphosed sandstone, limestone, etc., and containing fossil remains of lowly-organised molluscs (soft-bodied organisms).

Cambrian, consisting of slates, sandstones, and conglomerates, and containing fossil remains of sponges, sea-weeds, star-fishes, sea-lilies, lowly shell-fish, marine worms, and the first land plants.

Silurian, consisting of slates, limestones, etc., and containing fossil remains of corals, chambered spiral shell-fish, crabs, sea-worms, and bony plates and scales of a low form of fish.

Devonian, consisting of old red sandstone, shales, and coralline limestone, and containing fossil land plants, fishes, belonging to shark, ray, and sturgeon families, and first fossil insect.

Carboniferous, consisting of mountain limestone, coal, sandstone, ironstone, clays, etc., and containing fossil scorpions, beetles, and amphibians.

Permian, consisting of new red sandstone, marls, magnesian limestones, etc., and containing fossils of true reptiles.

* A paper read on October 20th, 1884, at Channing Hall, and on November 3rd, 1884, at Cutlers' Hall, Sheffield ; illustrated with diagrams.

The Secondary division is subdivided into three periods, viz. :—

Triassic, consisting of sandstone, limestone, and clays, and containing fossils of gigantic reptiles and first mammals (small marsupials).

Jurassic, or Oölitic, consisting of limestones, coral rags, clays, and marls, and containing fossils of bird-reptiles and several species of marsupials.

Cretaceous, consisting of clays, sands, soft limestone, and lignites, and containing fossils of new bird-reptiles.

The Tertiary division is subdivided into four periods—viz. :—

Eocene (dawn of recent life), consisting of sandstone, limestone, sands, clays, marls, coral rags, and lignites, and containing fossil equine forms, birds, reptiles, bats, and marsupials.

Meiocene (less recent life), consisting of arctic coal, limestone, sands, clays, and lignites, and containing fossil apes and marsupials.

Pleiocene (more recent life), the white and red crags of Britain, containing fossil apes, bears, and hyenas.

Pleistocene (most recent life), consisting of glacial accumulations of all kinds of earths, and containing fossil remains of apes and men, and implements of stone, bone, and horn, and later still of remains of lake-dwellings, shell-mounds, etc.

These different layers of stratified rocks have not always kept their proper positions with regard to each other in the order they were originally laid down ; but, owing to volcanic eruption, have frequently intruded upon each other, so that, at first sight, it would sometimes appear as though the regular order of deposition had not been adhered to ; but that this is not so has been made apparent by careful investigation over large areas. The depth of the Secondary and Tertiary is from twenty to twenty-five miles. We see, therefore, that the first life-forms made their appearance as marine organisms in the Laurentian, or first stratified rock period ; but whether the animal or the vegetable form first appeared, or whether both were developed from one primordial organism, it is impossible at present to say. In each successive layer of rock we meet with fossil remains of animal and vegetable life, which steadily develop into more highly organised forms, through the different periods, until, at last, they assume the exquisite phases we now behold around us. The vegetable kingdom was the first to exist upon the land, the first land-plant being found in the fossil state in the Cambrian layer, at the same time that marine animal life was assuming the forms of worms, shell-fish, and star-fishes. In the Silurian period the first vertebrate animals made their appearance in the form of lowly-organised fishes, from which, in the Carboniferous age, developed amphibious creatures, the first breathing animals, living both in and out of water, and the progenitors of the large kingdom of land animals, including man.

Now, if we take the pedigree of man, as arranged by Darwin and Haeckel, and compare it with this geological tree, we shall see how perfectly the sister sciences of Paleontology and Biology corroborate each other. The first form of life, says Haeckel, was the Moneron, a structureless albuminous atom of bioplasm, not even possessing the structure of a mere cell. We place this, which belongs to the primitive order Protozoa, in the Laurentian period, where we are told by geologists that fossil foraminifera have been found. This promordial organism gradually developed into single nucleated cells, called Amœbæ, and these again into masses of nucleated cells, called Synamœbæ. These simple and multiple cell organisms we place in the next period, Huronian, in the strata of which geologists tell us have been found fossil remains of lowly organised molluscs, or soft-bodied animals. Ciliata are the next forms of life, which consist of Synamœbæ, covered with vibratile cilia. These gradually developed a mouth, becoming Gastroœada, and afterwards Turbellaria, a low form of worm (Vermes), with a mouth and alimentary canal; and are placed in the Cambrian period, in which stratum have been found remains of this kind of life. The ascent continues through the transition stage of Scolecida to Himatega, or sack-worms, with their rudimentary spinal cords; from which gradually evolved Acrania, or the first vertebrate animals, without skulls, brains, central heart, jaws, or limbs; but with a true vertebral cord. This peculiar little animal was a lancet-shaped marine worm, akin to the lancelet or amphioxus of to-day. From these developed Monorrhini, or vetebrate hybrid worms and fishes, with skull, brain, and central heart, but no sympathetic system, jaws, or limbs, and with a single nasal cavity (lampreys). These three forms are placed in the Silurian period, in which stratum have been found fossilised bony plates and scales of fishes and Annelides, or sea-worms.

The next forms of life to be developed, from the Monorrhini, were the Selachii (Amphirrhini), or true fishes, of the shark family, with two nasal cavities, swim-bladder, two pairs of fins, and jaws. From these evolved the Ganoidei, and thence all osseous fishes; and Dipnoi (mud fish), or hybrid fishes and amphibians, with both gills and lungs. These little animals live during winter in water, when they breathe air dissolved in water through their gills; and during the summer in mud, when they breathe with their lungs. Both these are placed in the Devonian period, in which have been found fossil sharks, etc. The next forms are Sozobranchii, or amphibians with persistent gills, from which evolved Urodela, or amphibians with transitory gills, but persistent tails, and legs; allied to the salamander. These are placed in the Carboniferous period, in which have been found fossilised amphibians. We next get Protamnia, or hybrid salamanders and lizards

(frogs and toads), with no gills or tails, but possessing an amnion and cloaca. These represent the parent forms of the three great higher branches of vertebrates—Reptilia, Aves (which evolved from reptiles), and Mammalia, and are placed in the Permian period, in which have been found fossilised amphibians and true reptiles. Monotremata (Promammalia) are the next forms developed in our pedigree, the parent forms of the class Mammalia ; with cloaca, amnion, and marsupial bones ; which are placed in the Triassic period ; and from which evolved Marsupialia, mammals with amnion and marsupial bones, but no cloaca ; allied to the kangaroo and opossum of to-day. This species we place in the Jurassic and Cretaceous periods. From Marsupialia developed the large kingdom of Placentalia, which lose the marsupial bones and cloaca, and acquire a placenta, and which we divide into three main branches, according to the particular placental formation. The first division we call Villiplacentalia (tufted placenta), from which evolved Edentata (sloth, ant-eaters, and tertiary monsters), Cetacea (marine placental mammals, such as whale, dolphin, porpoise, and sea-cow), and Ungulata (horse, cow, pig, rhinoceros, and hippopotamus). The second division we term Zenoplacentalia (ring-like placenta), the earliest forms of which were Carnaria, or flesh-eaters, from which came Carnivora, or land beasts of prey (cats, dogs, bears, etc.), and Pinnipedia, or marine beasts of prey (seal and walrus). The third division we name Discoplacentalia (discoid placenta) ; and here we find, as the first development, the Prosimiæ, or tailed lemurs, quadrupeds with claws, and having the appearance of hybrid cats and monkeys. All these are placed in the Eocene period, in which stratum geologists have found fossilised placentals.

From the discoplacental-mammal Prosimiæ evolved the following species—viz., Prosimiæ of Madagascar (lemurs of to-day), with four feet and claws ; Cheiroptera (bats) ; Rodentia (squirrels, mice, porcupines, hares) ; Insectivora (moles, shrew-mice, and hedgehogs) ; and Simiæ, or quadruped monkeys, with two feet, two hands, nails, and tails. We divide Simiæ into two classes, the Platyrrhini, or New World apes, with thirty-six teeth, tails, no cheek-pouches or callosities, and nasal cavities pointing outwards and divided by a thick septum (from which came the American howlers, weepers, capuchins, and squirrel-monkeys) ; and the Catarrhini (Menocerca), or Old World apes, with thirty-two teeth (like man), tails, cheek-pouches, callosities, and nasal cavities pointing downwards and divided by a thin septum (like man). These are placed in the Miocene period, in which have been discovered the first fossil apes. From the Catarrhini developed the tailed baboons and macaques, with thirty-two teeth, cheek-pouches, and callosities ; and the Anthropoidæ, with thirty-two teeth, but no tails, cheek-pouches, or callosities. These were evolved during the Pleiocene period. From the anthropoid (man-

like) apes we get three distinct divisions—viz., the gibbon and orang families, with no tails or cheek-pouches, walking partly on hind legs, and wandering in companies in India; the chimpanzee and gorilla families of Africa, with no tails or cheek-pouches, no articulate speech, walking on hind legs only, living in companies in caves, and carrying their babes in their arms; and Alali, or ape-like men, commonly called the “missing links,” who were probably developed, during the Pleiocene period, in Lemuria, a submerged continent which formerly occupied the position of the Indian Ocean; or in the districts of the Nile and Ganges.

These primitive ape-like men were the connecting links between men and the apes, and are divided into two main branches—viz., woolly-haired Alali, who migrated from Lemuria, west and south; and straight-haired Alali, who migrated from Lemuria, north, east, and south. Both these branches had skulls of the same character as those of the chimpanzee and gorilla—that is, they were dolichocephalic (long-headed) prognathous (prominent jaws), and also, like their ape brethren, were troglodytes, or cave-dwellers. From the woolly-haired Alali evolved the Papuans of New Guinea and Tasmania, and the Hottentots of Africa, whose descendants of to-day are but little removed in brain development from the higher apes. They are dolichocephalic prognathous savages, with black, hairy skins, long arms, and short, thin legs, with ill-developed calves; are semi-erect, walk on hind legs, and have no true articulate speech. A higher development of the woolly-haired Alali is the Negro, and higher still the Caffre, both of whom are dolichocephalic prognathous savages, with black, semi-hairy skins, and imperfect articulation. From the straight-haired Alali are derived the Australian natives and the large family of Malays or Polynesians. The Australians migrated south, and were dolichocephalic prognathous savages, with smooth, dirty brown skins, and straight black hair. The lowest tribes of the present day have no true articulate speech. The Polynesians migrated north and east, and were dolichocephalic prognathous troglodytes (as the gorilla and chimpanzee), with clear, smooth brown skins, and true articulate speech. This branch split up into two large families, the Mongolian or Turanian, and the Caucasian or Iranian. The former covered Northern and Eastern Asia, Polynesia, and America, and were originally brachycephalic (broad-headed) prognathous men. They subdivided into two distinct species, the Mongols of China, Japan, Lapland, Finland, and Hungary, who are brachycephalic, but not prognathous, with smooth, brownish yellow skin, and straight black hair; and the Mongols of America, who are mesocephalic (round-headed), but not prognathous, with smooth red skins and straight black hair. The Caucasian family covered Western Asia and most of Europe, being mesocephalic prognathous troglodytes (afterwards agriculturalists),

with smooth dark skins and long straight hair ; and subdivided into two branches, the Semitic, of Arabia and Syria, and the Aryan or Indo-European ; both of whom are mesocephalic, but not prognathous.

It is true that, so far, no fossil remains of Alali have been found, with the exception of the Neanderthal skull ; but it is equally true that they may soon be discovered. It is only comparatively recently that the other species have been found fossilised ; and it must be recollected that only a very small portion of the earth's crust has yet been explored, and that not the most likely for finding. No attempts have been yet made to unearth the life-remains in the neighbourhood of the Indian Ocean, where it is believed man first evolved from his ape-like ancestors. It does not, however, seem to me to be essentially necessary that the "missing link" be found in order to substantiate the Evolution theory. There is so little difference between the higher anthropoid apes and man, compared with the enormous differences observed between the earlier forms of life and the ape species, that the sequence and continuity appear now conclusively settled to any reasonable observer. Comparative anatomists and embryologists both declare in favour of the theory of development of Darwin and Haeckel. It is a fact beyond dispute that every human being commences his individual existence as a tiny piece of structureless bioplasm, from which condition he passes through the *Amœba* stage to the *Synamœba*, and thence in regular order through each successive stage of development marked in the genealogy given above, becoming worm, fish, and mammal in turn, and finally being born into the world as a member of the human family. Each of these lower forms also passes through all the species preceding it in precisely the same manner. This is one of the strongest arguments in favour of Evolution. It is said that the power of speech possessed by man opposes a strong barrier to the theory ; but it has been shown clearly that other animals besides man can use articulate sounds, which convey meanings to each other. Monkeys certainly understand each other's chattering, and it is highly probable that birds also understand each other's cries. It is true that the sounds made by animals are chiefly monosyllabic ; but philologists now tell us that the languages spoken by primitive races of men are compounded of quite simple elements, perfectly within the grasp of an ape's voice. Travellers, whose veracity and ability cannot be impugned, have described long conferences held by monkeys, where one individual addressed the assembly at great length, fixing the attention of all upon himself, and quelling every disturbance by a loud and harsh cry, which was at once recognised and obeyed by the multitude. Is it credible that this should be purposeless ? Is it not actually the exercise of speech ?

HERBERT JUNIUS HARDWICKE, M.D., F.R.C.S.

SACRED AND SECULAR.

THE word sacred has been used with several different meanings: perhaps, therefore, it will be useful and interesting to briefly refer to some of them.

Things Relating to God and Religion.—These have in all ages been considered sacred, for reasons that will appear obvious enough, judging from the standpoint from which they have been looked at. Worship and devotion have been viewed as the very highest pursuits in which man could possibly be engaged, for the reason that such are acceptable to, and enjoined by, some supreme power or powers. All, therefore, that relates to these exercises has been termed sacred, as being distinct from the ordinary affairs of life and elevating mankind above the commonplace duties of earth. The supposed other world has had so much precedence over this—indeed, so great in men's minds has been the contrast between the two worlds, arising from the disproportion in their joys and the duration they were to continue—that the duties relating to the two have been regarded, not simply as differing in degree, but also in their very nature. They lay in separate grooves, after running, not side by side, but with a marked and ever-increasing divergence. Hence, the more ardently the one was followed, the greater was the neglect of the other. The matters, consequently, relating to the one have been termed sacred, while the duties of the other have even been designated profane, or, as we should now say, secular. Thus in most religions there have been "sacred mysteries"—that is, mysteries of a much higher and of a far more important character than those which have had to do with philosophy; mysteries the peering into which by profane eyes has often been considered the most heinous offence, the only fitting punishment for which was death. Closely allied to these we have had "sacred feasts," which in certain forms still remain among us, always with a religious significance. Religious poetry is called sacred poetry, and this name it retains however great may be the nonsense it teaches, or however inferior it may be in its artistic construction. Hardly anywhere is it possible to come across such a mass of doggerel as is to be found in most of the hymn-books in use in the churches at the present time. If religious people met elsewhere with such faulty rhythm, such halting measure, as they sing every Sunday in their churches, they would make exceedingly merry over it. And they would do so here but that there is a sacred,

or, at least, a *quasi*-sacred character, attaching itself to the hymn. If we take up any hymn-book and criticise it, as we would a volume of secular poems, we shall speedily discover the kind of stuff we are dealing with. Of course, it is not intended here to imply that all religious poetry is bad. Undoubtedly, much of it is beautiful, and could only have been written under the influence of genius. But the admittedly excellent poetry is sacred, not by virtue of its excellence, but because it has to do with a god or religion, and is an element of worship. Then sacred books are called sacred, and are spoken of as the sacred Scriptures, the sacred text, and so on. Perhaps there is an additional reason for this being done, which is, that they are said to be inspired by God. It does not alter the fact, however, that their sacredness depends upon their religious character. They are said to be of Divine authority, which is only another way of saying that they have to do with God and with another life.

Consecrated, or set apart.—A thing is sometimes called sacred when it is set apart for an especial use, even when the use may not be an exclusively religious one. Thus Dryden says :—

“O'er its eastern gates was raised above
A temple *sacred* to the queen of love.”

Religious things are frequently called sacred for this reason, in addition to the other. But still a sacred thing, in this meaning of the word, need not be exclusively religious. A church or lecture hall might be, in this sense, sacred—that is, set apart for a particular purpose ; but, as the former will invariably be called sacred, and the same designation be persistently denied to the latter, it is clear that such is not the meaning attached to the word in this particular case. The “consecration” of a building by a bishop means more, much more, than the mere setting of it apart.

Very Superior.—This is a legitimate enough sense in which to use the word sacred, and one to which we can have no objection whatever. Poets and other writers have occasionally so employed it. Thus Cowley remarks :—

“Poet and saint, to thee alone were given
The two most *sacred* names in earth and heaven.”

From the fact that the poet is here coupled with the saint, it is evident that the word sacred is not used in this instance in a religious sense, but to mean great intellect or moral superiority—a meaning which properly belongs to it, and one which might be universally adopted without giving offence to any one. Thus Shakespeare and Milton and Byron and Longfellow and Bryant and Whittier, and all the men who have by their genius raised their race to a higher position, morally, socially, or

intellectually, and given a charm to life and a beauty to nature, by virtue of their transcendent powers would be henceforth known as sacred characters.

Inviolable.—Thus we speak of a bond, or a promise, or a secret as being sacred, and in this sense it is quite legitimate and very appropriate. What should be more sacred than the friendship existing between two persons who thoroughly trust each other and are trustworthy; who would sooner die than betray each other's confidence? Such friendship is not based upon selfish desires and the absorbing passion to secure pecuniary gain from personal associations. Such a mockery of friendship as this is as hollow as it is degrading, and can only be found among those who have to learn the highest instincts of a true man:—

“Friendship, above all ties, does bind the heart,
And faith in friendship is the noblest part.”

In the last three definitions of the word sacred there is really no actual difference—at least, except in degree—between the sacred and the secular. Not only can they both exist together, but the former is included in the latter, and imparts to it a charm which, in the special cases considered, it would not otherwise possess.

CHARLES WATTS.

AGNOSTICISM AS A CREED FOR THE SCIENTIST.

MORE than a century has elapsed since that great mathematician and astronomer, La Lande, exclaimed: “I have examined the whole expanse of the heavens, and I can find no trace of God;” and yet the *savant* of to-day can make but a similar reply to the question of the oriental sage who asked, “Can man by searching find out God?” For, look where he will, as far as his instruments will allow him to explore, either the infinitely great or the infinitely small, he can discover nothing that indicates the supernatural. In every direction he discerns but the results of natural forces, and, though he is aware that the why and wherefore of *all* the phenomena he observes around him cannot be explained at the present stage of our knowledge, he yet knows that, as time goes on, and observation upon observation accumulates, that will be known in the future which to him is at present unknown. The modern scientist, therefore, refuses to call in the aid of a power called God to explain the, at present, unexplainable, preferring to wait until the evidence is sufficient for him to draw just conclusions from, before attempting to explain anything.

Instead of following the example of the theologian, and dogmatizing about that of which he knows nothing, the true man of science says : " Though the various phenomena I see around me appear to me but the outcome of purely physical forces, yet, as I cannot know of anything that may be beyond phenomena, it is possible that there may exist some power, force, or being outside all that I see ; but, as I can never positively know, I prefer neither to say there is nor that there is not : there may be, but I do not know. I am Agnostic—without knowledge."

There is another reason why the modern man of science should be an Agnostic, in addition to the one just mentioned, and that is that, as we can know of nothing behind phenomena, all our conceptions of a first cause, such as a Supreme Being, existing outside the material universe can only be of an anthropomorphic nature. At the best, it can only be a creation of the imagination—a magnified image of ourselves. The more backward we may be in the march of progress, the more crude and imperfect is our idea of such a being ; the more advanced we are, the more perfect (in all probability) is our conception of such a being. But, however advanced we may be, our ideas on the subject can be but the vaguest guesses, of a most imperfect nature ; for we are *finite*, and such a being, if he exist, must be *infinite* ; and it yet remains to be discovered by what means finite man can form a true conception of the infinite. Thus the God-idea of the philosopher who is, at the same time, a Theist, is altogether different from the Jewish conception of God, as given in the Bible, where the being portrayed is represented as possessing all the attributes of man.

A common, and at the same time a very absurd, argument is put forward in the pages of a contemporary as one which should silence Sceptics in general and Agnostics in particular, and is to the effect that, because the immortal Newton and others believed in the existence of a God, modern philosophers should do the same. But those who argue thus are forgetful that, since Newton's time, many things have been shown to have a purely physical cause which, to him, must have been only explainable upon the assumption that such a being existed. To mention only one thing : the various forms of life that are to be found upon the surface of the globe we inhabit could, to him, appear possible only upon the assumption that they were separately created. The doctrine of Evolution, as enunciated by Darwin, and which perfectly accounts for the various species as being but the results of " natural selection " and the " survival of the fittest," was, to Newton, unknown. If he were alive at the present time, it is not so certain that he would regard the Bible in the same light as he did when he wrote his book on " The Prophecies." He would, most probably, have believed, with Darwin, " that no revelation has ever been made."

If we are to believe in the truth of certain theological speculations because some famous men believed them, then it follows that, to be consistent, we should believe in astrology because the great astronomer, Tycho Brahé, believed in it ; or in witchcraft, because John Wesley considered it true. The arguments are just as applicable in the one case as in the other ; but who, I should like to know, believes in astrology or witchcraft in this the nineteenth century just because Tycho or Wesley believed in the truth of those respective superstitions. Of course, we are bound to give greater consideration to the views of a Tycho Brahé, a Newton, or a Darwin, than to those held by men of less intellectual eminence ; but it does not follow that we are to believe in all they say.

Authority does not count for so much in scientific as it does in religious matters. Great men are not infallible, however superior to their fellow mortals they may be. Newton, for instance, believed in what is known as the *corpuscular* theory of light, according to which theory it was held that light consists in the actual emanation of inconceivably minute luminous particles from the luminous body, and that by their actually striking upon our eyes the sensation of vision was excited. But, though the great Newton considered the theory sufficient to explain the various phenomena of light, it is no longer believed in by physicists, having been proved inadequate to explain *all* the phenomena which modern research has shown to be connected with light. It is now supplanted by the *undulatory* theory, according to which hypothesis it is assumed that all bodies, as well as all space, are pervaded with an extremely thin and elastic fluid called *ether*, and that light is caused by a vibratory motion imparted to the molecules of this *ether*, in consequence of which a series of excessively minute waves are produced, which, by successively striking upon the retina, excite the sensation of vision. Therefore, if the immortal Newton could be mistaken in a subject about which he knew more than any of his contemporaries, is it not possible that his views of the Deity were equally fallacious, especially as upon that point he could know no more than what everybody else knew ?

That Agnosticism is the proper attitude of mind for the scientist to assume with respect to the supernatural could not be more fittingly demonstrated than by the fact that phenomena, formerly regarded as the manifestations of the supernatural, are now looked upon as quite common-place occurrences. Such, for instance, as the apparitions of a comet, which celestial visitors are now divested of all superstitious reverence, since they have been shown to be under the influence of the law of gravitation ; or the phenomena of an ordinary thunderstorm, which, until Franklin, by flying his kite, showed lightning to be a discharge of atmospheric electricity, was looked upon as a token of God's anger.

B. J. HOPKINS, F.R.A.S.

A.D. 2500.

ANTIPODEAN AGNOSTICISM: ITS WHENCE AND ITS WHITHER.

CHAPTER II.—ITS WHENCE : FURTHER DETAILS.

ON to the vast island there poured, as we have intimated, a heterogeneous medley of Professors of the Infinitude from every dry and crowded quarter of the globe. As they all sold, and really did mean and wish to sell, the One and Only Immensity, their several views of it, placed in such immediate juxtaposition, produced an effect which might have been anticipated by a South Kensington student or a Kidderminster carpet-weaver happening to transfer his experience to spiritual fabrics.

Says Clough: "Great is Allah, and great is Juxtaposition, his prophet."

The reds were at once seen to be disagreeably *prononcés*, the greens to err on the side of jejuneness, or modesty; the angles of the square were unaccommodating, and the circles couldn't summon up friction enough to prevent some very aimless gyrating. As patriotism knocked their heads together, as they discovered common objects—such as the dire necessity of completing ecclesiastical matricide, a rather ghastly business that cannot, on the spiritual war-path, well be avoided—and, happily, the more cheering desirability of uniting in order more thoroughly to exploit Fijian medicine men, the grosser absurdities of the older bodies were thrown out; and the Roman Catholic, thanks to an adaptability which he had learnt in a succession of climes, was not long before he began to cut down his aves and to place in his confessional boxes easy chairs instead of the uninviting priedieus. No Roman Catholic would, however, have gone the length of substituting for the juice of the Mediterranean grape an emulcent decoction of the Eucalyptus. This Curtius-like leap into the much-embracing gulf of patriotism was made by the Anglican, and the heresy was spoken of in the island as "the offence of the gum-tree;" but elsewhere it was said that they had wantonly sacrificed that which was most valuable of all the bonded goods in the Colonial Custom House; and the leap severely strained, though it did not actually, for the nonce, sever, the home relations. Eventually this culpable disregard of all decency had the direst consequences; and, perhaps, from the Home Church

point of view, it was right to regard it as—

The little rift within the lute
That, by-and-bye, would make the music mute,
And, ever widening, slowly silence all.

But, for the present, there seemed little fatality about the change. Of course, the note and ring contributed by the Anglican Church to the creed-concerto was affected, but only favourably. The harmonics were emphasized, the *timbre* was improved; and throughout the long period of tuning-up which now set in one could distinctly hear the mellow resonance of the 'cello giving body to the chattering frivolity of the other instruments; while the deep boom of the bass administered, from time to time, the even more solemn and necessary caution, that vibrations might become too rapid to affect, either for good or for bad, the human tympanum.

At last the attention of the island was directed to a strict analysis of the concrete presentation of the Infinite by the third successor of Bishop Worry. I might mention that, when the Federation was first declared, President Kangaroo had very much strengthened his position with the Conservative Party, and particularly the old maids—*rare aves* in a colony, but, on that account, perhaps, all the more petted—by getting, though in a very indirect way, the then Bishop to write to him a letter. The letter was as follows:—

MY VERY DEAR SIR,—I have felt myself stirred up to communicate with you in reference to the struggles which now, by Infinite permission, seriously engage the thoughts of men, and unduly distract them, I fear, from their spiritual and even from their temporal concerns. Truly this is a time when men's hearts may be said to fail them for fear, and when those who have any strength to reconnoitre may behold round their frail vessel the sea and the waves roaring. That you may long be spared stand at the helm and to pursue the unswerving course which, by the mercy of the Measureless, has hitherto characterised your pilgrimage is the earnest prayer of—

Yours most sincerely,

In the Brotherhood of Antipodean Infinity,

JEREMIAH SYDNEY.

Never was a letter written which deserved more respect. Worn out by the effort to adapt himself, at a mature age, to a new sky and new manners, the Bishop was in a highly nervous condition, and reacted, in an exaggerated fashion, to external stimulus. It was a sort of mental string-halt. At first, indeed, he had supported the old Premier with the old-world prejudices; afterwards he had honestly brought himself to see that the success of Kangaroo's policy was absolutely necessary for the due development of the Antipodes. But the effect had been fairly purchased in wear and tear, and he now took an unnecessarily grievous view of the "roaring," which was not, in reality, much more

dreadful than that of Snug the joiner. A Redistribution Bill was in contemplation, and it was also proposed to give suffrages to the few remaining Aborigines. It would look a little less as if they were being wiped out of existence ; while, of course, it would not seriously impede the process. But certainly Kangaroo should have appreciated a little more generously the old man's loyal courtesies.

The young Premier was in the smoking-room of the House. On reading the letter his eyes sparkled, he jumped up, and he executed an incipient breakdown. In five minutes his old school chum, the editor of the *South Pole*, was at his elbow.

"By Atlas ! we've drawn the varmint ! Aint my terriers worked well ?" and therewith he tossed him over the letter.

The editor read, and, as he read, he smiled a smile which, on close analysis, would have been found to be the non-committal smile proper to an editor of a threepenny daily. Premiers rotate, but the *Pole* holds on for ever.

"I shall press the division this day week. You'll print this tomorrow, eh ? It will give me the ten votes I lost over the Wool mistake."

The Wool mistake was known to the Kangaroo hounds as the Fleece job. It had provided endless legs of mutton with trimmings for a *fidus Achates* and for several cousins.

The letter made its centripetal journey, and was flung off radially, "on good authority," with the diurnal swish. The effect was enormous. The ten votes came in at once. Had they read the letter themselves, not one voter would have been found to turn again and render the franchise to Wagga-wagga paterfamilias ; but, then, Mrs. Neo Grundy read the letter to them, and that made all the difference. Nor did the epistle cost the Premier any of his Radical tail. The extreme tip curled a little in a slightly derisive manner, as you may see the appendage of a cat behaving when it thinks it knows a wrinkle or two about mouse-catching beyond the strategical notions of the claws and whiskers ; but a confidential wink from headquarters sent it to sleep again. The Bill was passed, and the atmosphere of judicious philanthropy which thereafter surrounded the President was a wall of fire to him in his sleepless night of office and a protecting cloud of sepia in the day when he had to retire.

After this excursion we must return to the strict analysis of the concrete presentation of the Infinite by the third successor of Bishop Worry, R.I.P.

When this third successor, wishing, in sporting language, to "wipe the eye" of Cardinal Ornithorhyncus, thought that the President for the time being, in return for numerous buttressings by the Church,

might do something by way of State-ratification of his Episcopal claim to be Arch-Professor of Antipodean Infinity, and hinted that the President was bound, out of respect to such Infinity, three times at least in the year to cut down his meals to very measurable, if not to exiguous, proportions; taking thereat, without fail, a dose of the Eucalyptus Emulcent, the President, every nerve and muscle of whose body worked eighteen hours out of the twenty-four, and who, consequently, was an excellent trencherman and averse to tinkering, objected very strongly. His strong objection was expressed in language of appropriate intensity; so much so that it was rumoured that he intended, sooner than comply with the Bishop's hint, to apply for the stewardship of a department of Infinity, where the office thermometer, even in the shade (if there *was* any shade, which was not quite certain, either on a *priori* or a *posteriori* considerations), exhibited an infinite number of degrees Fahr. above blood heat. This rumour reached the Bishop by the same post as a circular from the Great Australian Wheel Bang Copper Co., Limited, apologising for the fact of the lodes having reached the said limits, and for the directors' consequent inability to pay dividends on this side of infinity, though they hoped that eventually—and so forth. Furthermore, the rumour and the circular came in the hot and sultry weather of January, when a thunderstorm had been several days overdue. It isn't very surprising, therefore, that the Bishop used language quite as wicked as that of the President, and, perhaps, more so; but, then, he was a Bishop, and his hearers were not at all shocked or amused, only awed: though some were pleasantly reminded of the fate which overtook the jackdaw of Rheims, not at present seeming very likely to affect their cross-grained, hard-working, but withal popular, leader.

And now we must go back a bit in our history.

When young Squatterson, the President of whom we have been speaking, first came of age, there was, of course, no expectation, except, perhaps, in the minds of his doting parents, that he was destined to play so high a part in the affairs of the country. He was the son of a wealthy landowner, owning an area equal to the estates of the Duke of Devonshire, multiplied by those of Sir W. W. Wynn. These hundreds of square miles the proprietor had taken up when the Government, in a grocer-like humour, and not having the fear of Henry George before its eyes, was selling over the counter the pre-emption of its land at two-pence halfpenny per square mile. The district yielded a special staple, and, though the elder Squatterson owned only a share of the district, he had managed, in the course of two years, to undersell his neighbours in a way that they, and each of them, came with a petition to be put into one of the shepherds' offices, that they might earn, in far outlying huts,

their fortnightly rations of bread, mutton, baccy, tea, and absolutely no whisky. The trick had been learned, it was said, in a Midland provincial capital; but, anyway, it answered capitally, and the family became possessed of such wealth that it was felt to be only proper that the son and heir, and future President, should, on attaining his majority, do the grand tour and see England, a place of sad, historic interest, if not, indeed, of mediæval gloom.

Thither accordingly he went; but his habits guided him to Ascot and Epsom rather than to the shrines of Shakespeare and Thomas a'Becket. There was some sense in this, for his view of Thomas a'Becket was very unhistorical, whereas he had a perfect right to fancy himself in the matter of horse-flesh, having taken kindly to a buggy-and-four at a year when most boys are usually promoted to long trousers. Then, too, he had a commission in blood sires to execute to the tune of more than a few thousand, in executing which it was that he came across no less a person than Viscount Grandstand, eldest son to the not pecunious Duke of Strawberry.

Though Grandstand got a pecuniary perch, it had not been so easy to dispose of the Lady Boadicea, the Lady Eleanor, the Lady Jane Grey, the Lady Mary, the Lady Elizabeth, and the rest of the nine ducal daughters. The long-continued period of agricultural distress, in spite of dairy farms, artificially incubated by Oxford Professors of Political Economy, by way of giving the proof of circumstances to their pet theories, and of allotment garden schemes, excogitated by caucus offshoots, had long ago dwindled the lordly estates into a miniature Palestine, farmed, in the fine old Roman sense, by Nathaniel Shimmy, Esq., now of Russell Square, but erst of Frankfort and Houndsditch. Much of this the embryo President had not been cute enough to see. His attention had been taken up with endeavours to get himself recognised by the Jockey Club as their accredited member in his own country. He was young then, and he thought the Jockey Club, as well as other less amusing institutions, should be catholic. And mortgages had not come much in his way. True, there were both rabbits and kangaroos, both of which played havoc with the natural produce of the country; and there were also parrots that had taken kindly to mutton, "all alive and grazing, oh!" but the Chosen Race was comparatively unknown. They had not yet, in Australia, obligingly fulfilled prophecy by the self-denying method of pursuing and exploiting their intellectual inferiors.

And, if he had scarcely heard of mortgages, we might positively say that he had never seen a lady. Says Matthew Arnold felicitously to his own heart:—

"Thou hast been, shalt be, art alone,

Or, if not quite alone, yet they
Which touch thee are unmating things."

The persons of the other sex whom Squatterson had met in his native country were unmating things; they somewhat resembled Touchstone's "ill-favoured virgin, but mine own." They were of the Bush, Bushy; they were useful, they were honest, they were kindly, they were good; but, oh! they were not blood fillies, and they hadn't the coquettishly pretty, or even wicked, ways that distinguished the true Eclipse or Gladiateur strain. When Squatterson saw the lithe figures of slenderest bone, those oval faces, the clean-cut features, the taper fingers, the filbert nails, into which shapes the extremely heterogeneous food procurable in an imperial city had had time, during many generations, to sort itself while in a state of complete isolation from all forms of manual production, except sonatas and painting on velvet, his heart smote within him. He felt himself the merest slug, as miserable a white-livered, cold-blooded, and insignificant mollusk as ever existed. But he dared to nibble; and, what with the strawberry being tired of its mode of existence, being, in fact, a little over ripe, what with the plant having a larger crop than it well knew how to dispose of, the nibble was affectionately pardoned, and eventually encroached all over the pulp.

"Squatterson has given me a nugget from his gold field," was the simple way in which the mother was set a-thinking that a fine export trade might be done with the Antipodes in an article on which no Government had yet dared to place any duty.

In short, Lady Boadicea annexed the reversion of the Squatterson run, and, in due course, proceeded thither, and might have been seen presiding over the official festivities at Sydney with a hauteur that could only have been acquired in the hot-houses where they make a *specialité* of Lady Clara Vere-de-Veres.

Space exigencies have confessed and absolved me of the heinous offence of not having yet carried out my promise of telling exactly how the Federation came by a Real Live Home Church of its own. I might add that nothing human could I possibly consider foreign to my tale, and the birth of a Church deserves, at least, such pains and false alarms, such calculations and such determinations, such sympathetic nursings, such midwively approvals, as the birth of prodigies of every day and of every couple. Disregarding, however, all the suspense-precedents of novel writers, and the irrefragable axioms of any University of fiction, which may be founded or chancellored by Mr. James Payn or Mr. Walter Besant, I take the readers, if there be any, into my confidence; and, at the tremendous risk of utterly severing the Gordian Knot (nutrient cord might one say?) which unites us, freely inform them that, from a side-by-side study of a certain jovial monarch

and the "rich attorney's elderly, ugly daughter," of which Messrs. Sullivan and Gilbert so merrily sing, they will be able to evolve the circumstances under which President Squatterson, an authority on such temporal and terrestrial matters as wool and horseflesh, became also (*Gratiâ Infinitatis*) *Fidei Australiensis Defensor*—a sort of Regius Professor, or even Quasi-Royal Patron of Antipodean Immensities and Infinities.

W. GREATHEED.

DO WE GENERALLY LOVE TRUTH?

BAUTRU, the French Sceptic, was once observed to bow to a wayside cross he passed. A spectator who knew him well expressed his surprise at the action. Bautru answered: "We bow; but we never speak." It is to be feared that many persons are upon bowing terms with Truth, but do not speak to her. They are afraid of compromising themselves with uncompromising Truth. They know that, generally speaking, Truth is not a *persona grata*, nor is her presence a welcome one. If only she would disguise herself a little—just a little, so as to be hardly recognised, they would not mind being seen in her company. "A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure;" and here again we see how few persons love unalloyed truth—truth without disguise; simple, severe, majestic, as she actually is. People profess to love Truth, and to desire none but her; but these professions must be discounted. They call her grand names, and talk of dying for her, but do not care to live for her—a harder thing to do. They speak of her worth as incalculable and her beauty as beyond compare, as they might speak of the light or beauty of a fixed star millions of miles off. When they have so desecrated they have done. The star exerts as much influence over their life as truth—and as little.

With this abounding pretence of loving truth, and truth only, let us be honest with ourselves and ask, Who wants it? Does the priest or savant, the statesman, politician, or diplomat? Does the Liberal, or Conservative, or Radical? Does the painter, composer, actor, singer, lecturer, editor, or pressman? Do these people want truth? Of course they do! Do they not acclaim truth in all places, at all times, in season and out of season, and especially out of season? Is not truth dearer to them than church or chapel, fame or notoriety, social position and exalted station with its privileges? The facts are notorious. Truth is so far required by all these persons as she may promote their several ends. That done, they have no further use for her, and the

sooner she quits public view and descends to the bottom of a well (any well will do!) the better for them and her. *Apaga Sathanas!*

But to come home closer to ourselves. Do we love truth? Do we like to hear that fraction of it our wives, friends, children, relatives, and neighbours give us from time to time? Would employers like to hear it from their workmen—workmen from their employers? Would merchants care to hear it from their clerks and subordinates, and “this last,” in their turn, from the merchants? Would congregations tolerate it from their spiritual guides, or the guides from their congregations? Would the patient or client like to hear it from his physician or lawyer, or *vice versa*? Would tradesfolk like the sound of it from their customers, or the customers from tradesfolk? Would the wife thank the husband for it, or the husband the wife? Would mistresses care for it from their servants, or servants from their mistresses? Ah me! things are already bad enough; wholesale truth-telling would make them alarmingly worse. Imagine that the population of London only agreed *for one day* to tell one another nothing but truth! (Truth is only what a man troweth!) Would not the great city feel the consequences of it for fifty years to come, if not longer? What revelations would be made! What heartburnings, hatreds, malice, envyings, and murders would result from it! The bare suggestion could only come from an enemy to man. Better remain as we are, encased in half-truths, half-beliefs, and fond conceits. There are enough hatreds in the world, enough scandals, enough hypocrisies and crimes. Truth would reveal vastly more, and make the lives of most men intolerable. We can always comfort ourselves with the assurance that there are religious organs and newspapers left which “speak the truth in love” of each other and of opponents. Such truth-telling, limited as it is to a few papers, generates sufficient “malice, hatred, and uncharitableness” to satisfy Christian editors and their friends. It would be a pity to have more of it. In which case we should have to do as firemen—limit the conflagration, or truth would burn us all up. An awful fate that—a fate to be avoided at all costs.

Let us “rest and be thankful” that our friends do not quarrel with us oftener than they do; we should otherwise hear more truth than we want. The wives of our bosoms also do well to be reticent of their opinions of their lords and masters; else we should be seeking comfort and consolation from those friends or associates who illustrate Bacon’s aphorism, that “a mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure.” It is fervently to be hoped that the Anti-Adulteration Society will let truth alone. Semele asked for a vision of Jove in his majesty, and it blasted her. The consequence was terrible, and so is the warning. No; truth must be reserved for sermons, gravestones, newspapers, telegrams, and

for State occasions, when it can give no offence, it always being freely distributed to everybody.

There was formerly a story current that, when Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States, he had ten thousand (or more) applications for the five thousand offices in his gift. He had only just installed himself in the White House when he was laid aside with a low fever, which his physician told him was contagious. Immediately he heard that, he had five thousand circulars printed and sent to the unsuccessful candidates, *stating that, his disorder being contagious, he had now something to give to everybody if they would call upon him.* It is not stated how many called. Truth, to many, perhaps to most, persons is a disorder one should avoid catching, for fear of untoward results.

Let us frankly meet the fact in the face. We love truth, and "in the inward parts" must exemplify it, else we shall be worthless men and women, miserably indifferent social beings and citizens. But we may have too much of a good thing, and be surfeited by it. Better, then, to cant no more about truth, *the* truth, or pure and unadulterated truth, there being no such thing. Our friends have it not, neither have priests or savants, or journalists, or any one else. Some portions of truth they have—not always the most valuable portions—nor are they freest from human alloy. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels," and it is good enough for the vessels so far. Like all vessels, some contain more than others, and show it to greater advantage. Some vessels their contents ennoble, some make ignoble; for truth can depress as well as upraise—it can discover dark places as well as brighten places already bright.

Man has personified truth, like the other virtues; and this practice has led him to treat his personified abstractions as realities having other than merely subjective existence. Now, truth is not a person, although we may, for rhetorical purposes, treat it as such. Truth is a generalisation, and, if we require to know what truth is, we must, to use George Lewes's illustration, immerse the abstraction into the concretes from which it was derived. By doing so we shall discover that all truth is relative, and that (what comes to the same thing) there is no such thing as absolute truth. There are truths of number, form, composition, etc., or truths of Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry; and although, in a sense, all truth is one, it has many facets; and the generalisations of each science and the co-ordination of their proper relations mirror different things in the facets. That is, each science has its own truths, and they do not resemble each other. The truths of Mathematics and the truths of Chemistry must obviously differ as the facts differ which form their subject-matter. So of the truths of the more complex

sciences, such as Biology and Sociology, which have their appropriate methods of research and verification.

Each science differs in the quality as well as quantity of truths it contributes to human certainties. The truths of Mathematics are demonstrable and verified in Astronomy. Physics complicates mathematical truths with those belonging to its own province—a valuable contribution. In Chemistry mathematical truths lose their simplicity, and almost their identity, in new relations of composition, decomposition, and recombination which form chemical truth. So, in Biology, chemical truth becomes mixed with vital, and uncertain in its operation, from the combination of non-vital with vital processes. Biological problems are made more difficult to solve by the different environments in which organisms live, the actions and re-actions they set up, and the modifications they introduce into organic life. In Sociology biological truths are rapidly absorbed, and become implicated with sociological truths, facts, or relations, to be discovered or postulated, belonging to the science of the social organism itself and peculiar to it.

It is obvious, then, that all the sciences have their own truths and proper instruments of research. Their several truths are true relatively; out of relation they are not true. The *consensus* of truths of the sciences gives us the notion of abstract truth; but we must always remember that it is only a notion. A true notion, it may be objected! Yes, if we remember it is true relatively; a false notion if we forget it, and one which will cause us to make a thousand errors—lead us into an *impasse*, in fact.

If these facts have due weight, we shall readily perceive that the search after absolute truth is as vain as that after the philosopher's stone, while its bye results, unlike those of alchemical research, are likely to be *nil*. As there is *a* truth, and not *the* truth, let us waste no more time talking about or seeking for a vain show. *A* truth is findable; *the* truth is not. The sciences, with morals, give us their several truths, all of wondrous value and potency. We shall have ample occupation for heart and brain in learning and using them. They will discover to us everything, strictly speaking, knowable, admirable, and lovable—all that which can supply us with stimuli for our own and others' mental and moral amelioration. *The truth* no more exists than Virgil's chimera, and it would be as idle to look for one as the other. It is only children who cry for the moon, or who expect to find the edge of the horizon in the next field. We have done with illusions. St. Paul said: "When I was a child I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but now I am become a man I put away childish things." We shall do well to follow in his steps.

J. KAINES, D.Sc.

NOTES AND SCRAPS.

THE first issue of THE AGNOSTIC has been very favourably received, not only by those to whom it directly appeals, but also by the general public. Encouraging communications have reached us from all parts of the country, our correspondents including scholars and thinkers of world-wide distinction. There is no doubt that THE AGNOSTIC supplies an admitted want; and, as the journal becomes better known, its success will be assured. In launching the venture we have had to contend with formidable difficulties, and, in certain quarters, with ungenerous opposition. We, however, confidently rely upon the steadfast loyalty of our whole-hearted friends to aid us, to the fullest possible extent, in our efforts to establish a monthly periodical of cultured liberal thought, which, by its moderation and ability, shall commend itself to the attention and support of advanced thinkers of every grade. We respectfully invite our readers to co-operate with us in extending the circulation of the magazine, by introducing it to their friends and by forwarding copies to probable subscribers. Our publishers will be pleased to send specimen copies on receipt of stamped and directed wrappers, or twelve copies will be despatched carriage free for five shillings to any friend who will undertake to distribute them in furtherance of the Cause.

"The Agnostic Annual," of which THE AGNOSTIC is practically a monthly issue, was the first periodical published in this country with the avowed object of propagating the principles of Agnosticism. Each issue of the "Annual" has been remarkably successful, and already several journals have adopted our nomenclature. It is peculiarly gratifying to us that our endeavours to establish liberal thought on a scientific and philosophical basis have been approved by the more scholarly and thoughtful sections of the Party, and we are hopeful that, if wise counsels prevail, many who have hitherto held aloof will strengthen the movement with their intellectual eminence and scientific attainments.

Dr. W. B. Carpenter, who contributed a very able and interesting paper to our opening number, writes that he feels much aggrieved at the tone of Captain McTaggart's reply to his "Basis of Belief." The learned Doctor adds that his opponent "not only treats my arguments as so puerile that a boy's squib would be sufficient to demolish them, but he makes imputations which are utterly untrue and personally offensive to me, and I must decline any further communication on the subject." We need hardly assure Dr. Carpenter that Captain McTaggart disclaims any intention to give offence, and that we deeply regret that his reply should be open to such an unfortunate misconstruction. The words to which exception is taken were, of course, used metaphorically, and were not meant to be interpreted literally. We sincerely trust that,

on reflection, Dr. Carpenter will generously accept this disclaimer and acquit our contributor of any desire to give personal offence. In our next number we hope to insert an examination of the "Basis of Belief," from the pen of a valued writer, and we bespeak the learned Doctor's attention to such examination.

A Religious Liberalism, loudly professed, should be examined with much caution. It is the convenient garb of dissimulation. Nothing can be more instructive, in this respect, than a perusal of the biographies of some famous Broad Churchmen in the Anglican communion, published in these latter years. Records, simply, from beginning to end, of concealment, equivocation, and double-dealing. It is refreshing to read a consistent Puritan memoir immediately thereafter. Narrowness will always be narrow; but it is often strong, within its limits, and full of healthy life.

The question of our intellectual dietary is an important one. Persons careful in regard to their physical digestion think they may safely indulge in an occasional meal of literary garbage—"just to see what it is like." It is a fatal error, for there is no medicine for the mind thus infected and contaminated. There are books rankly poisonous—spotted gaudily, like unwholesome fungi; and there are books unhealthy, though not deadly. A course of reading confined to the latter must, however, prove harmful in the end. Yet thinking men, who would not recommend us to associate with every class of companions, advise us to read *all* books. Next to the fallacy that everything printed is necessarily *true* comes that other, that everything printed is necessarily *pure*.

With the commoner forms of bigotry and fanaticism it is, as a general rule, useless to meddle. They are better left alone: in process of time, like venomous and evil things, hatched in slime and darkness, they will sting themselves until they die. Only against one abhorrent type of bigotry would we lift an unsparing sword—against that which, under the pretence and cover of Freethought, denies itself, as of conscience, the use of a word, a phrase, a thought, which has enriched, and shall enrich, the minds of myriads, because it is to be found within the pages of the Bible, as we read it. There is no depth of mental slavery baser than this; yet it is pitifully common.

Advices from Toronto report great progress in the liberal movement among our Canadian cousins. A numerous-attended and most enthusiastic conference has just been held, at which Mr. Charles Watts was present. The English friends will be pleased to know that Mr. Watts's popularity in the United States is still rapidly increasing, and that his advocacy of Agnosticism has elicited the highest encomiums from the liberal public.

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"Agnosticism simply means that a man shall not say he knows or believes that which he has no scientific grounds for professing to know or believe.....Agnosticism says that we know nothing of what may be beyond phenomena."—PROF. HUXLEY.

"I think that generally (and more and more as I grow older), but not always, an Agnostic would be the more correct description of my state of mind."—CHARLES DARWIN.

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THE AGNOSTIC.

MARCH, 1885.

THE CONFESSION OF AGNOSTICISM.

FUNDAMENTALS.

EXTREMES meet. Supernaturalism and the denial of Supernaturalism, which is Atheistic Materialism, are alike in one respect. Both seek to intrude "within the veil"—the former to affirm, the latter to deny, when affirmation and denial are alike profane. In reality, these thought-systems depend upon each other. Every affirmation of the one lays itself open to a corresponding—and, in the circumstances, equally valid—denial; while each denial of the other requires from its neighbour an affirmation upon which it may be founded or take effect. A suspensive position (Agnosticism) has its midway distance from either pole, but depends not upon these extremes. Subtract the extremes, and the mean remains—no longer as the mean, it is true, but as a declaration of nescience, absolute, not relative; possibly preceding any idea, or hint, of a Supreme Being, Cause, or Primal Origin, and unaltered by any subsequent theorising in respect thereof. Agnosticism remains when other religions wax old, without any era of revelation, without any brief years of Incarnation—any emotional age of belief, or equally emotional hysterical denial.

We are saved by the breadth of our Agnosticism from the decay incident to detail. For every religious system degenerates more or less quickly in proportion to the particularity of its pet revelation. The reason is obvious: the more laboured the portrayal of the supposed Deity or supreme entity revealing himself, the more is that which is revealed part of the thought of the worshipper, and human thought is changeable and evanescent. The more human the detail, the more definition, the quicker the decay. Those faiths are the sublimest and the most lasting which are the least anthropomorphic, in which the

object of adoration or contemplation is farthest removed and most deeply hidden. It is a dying faith which needs an Incarnation to revive it and to give it more purely human interest. The Deity who is to be without beginning of days or end of years has thoughts farthest from the thoughts of the adorer and ways higher than his. For this reason a grim and stern Puritan gospel will outlast and outdare all others, nourishing myriads of faithful souls by the sheer strength of its higher, because non-human, irresistible divine decrees; while a weaker, philanthropic creed will only sate and disgust with its amiability. Nothing can be more paltry than that ascription of largely-magnified purely human virtues to the Deity which makes an enervated religion. It is boneless and pithless; generous to a fault in the matter of retribution; not willing that any should be so much as afraid of perishing, and so lavish in reward to its least faithful adherents as to promise him—as if he were the dunce of an infant school—a consolation prize, with all his fellows, at the final examination. The purely human Religion of Benevolence assigns to every comer, however unworthy, the fee-simple of a parallelogram in the shining fields. The human element fades and passes away. The eternal element in religion is mystery unbroken: all else is dead or dying.

The final issue of this degeneration is dissolution, utter decay—the capacity of holding together wholly gone. But as long as life lasts the worst is not come. Any faith is better than non-faith—better than the denial of any ground of faith. And, if we are to company with any, it must be with the living—preferably with the healthy, not with those whose intellect is moribund. We prefer to range our Agnosticism, if with any religious faith it is to be ranged for the sake of comparison, with the higher types of revealed religion, or with the still nobler examples of ecstatic contemplation. With these we may company without apology. All of them admit the necessity which exists for nourishment other than that fitted for the body. In this we agree, believing as we do that it were as reasonable to question the reality of bodily thirst as that of its spiritual correlative. We agree in postulating the unsatisfactoriness of Secular bread and water by themselves. The sameness and tameness of that diet has starved many.

Yet *any* addition to this every-day nutriment will not content us. Something more is needed. Can we agree as to its nature? To please us, the other side of life and living must not be a pale reflection of the side nearest to us; else it will be superfluous, and only as small change for the larger coin already in our possession. The desired “relief” from daily toil must not be a simple extension of hope into the future—a thing of no “present help” to us. If, again, something professedly Divine be tendered us, it is, by its very nature, above us—

too high for our attainment. If something less than Divine, it is beneath us. So that, in the end, we differ hopelessly from any creed professing belief in the known. Neither without God nor with him can we be content; and yet we are solitary if without a companion high as the angels. Who or what can comfort us? Only the unknown and unknowable. With that sure relief—

“Higher than the heights above,
Deeper than the depths beneath”—

we are strong. We welcome that kindly dark which hides all secrets, when all the gods forsake and are forsaken. If even Omnipotence cannot avail us, being far from us in every sense; if the finite cannot hold converse with the Infinite, at least the humblest among us can turn his tired eyes to the “raven-down” of the unknown gloom, gladder for the soothing darkness and for the silence that never is broken than for any welcoming voice.

We contend—though by a daylight generation such as the present our contention is scorned—that that known presence of the unknown, in which we have sure confidence, supplies us with that solace which otherwise were wanting in the plan of life. Nought that is known or knowable of can fill the place of it. Breathe to me of a God, and that instant I must doubt him. Tell me there *may* be a God, and, perforce, I must believe him. To know is well and needful; to know all were only sorrow. The condition of healthy mentality is, in one supreme sense, to be evermore athirst, with a thirst that cannot be slaked. The Religionist, full of the knowledge of his own particular, petty Infinite, of course rebukes our theory as “unsatisfying.” Precisely. But satisfaction is not everything. Given a craving, a life-thirst—a pain, if you will; for all longing, as the Buddhist puts it, is pain in the end—that pain, throes divine and immortal, is the normal healthy condition of the soul; the absence of it dull satiety; or its dulling by illegitimate methods is but disease. Change the craving to repletion, and there is instant sadness. Wistfulness is life, and life, in part, is wistfulness. The Gospel saying is reversed: the earthly stream slakes the parching thirst; the diviner fountain, with all the abundance of the draught, leads us evermore to thirst again.

Nor are we concerned with that other objection, repeated in our ears to weariness, that a purely receptive habit of mind, in a religious sense—what has been elsewhere, and in a different connection, called “a lying open to all the truth of God”—will be unfruitful in the region of morality, besides being (as is alleged) an unintelligible attitude to the many. A wholly unknowable object of Agnostic contemplation will never, we are told, help to make men, women, and children “good.”

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It is scarcely logical, we think, to libel that which is unknowable as inoperative for good. But let that pass. Is not the Deity of the popular faith declared to be unsearchable, past finding out, and wholly mysterious in working? Yet he is supposed to move his worshippers to morality. This is only in part the case. It is only in so far as the gods have come down to us in the likeness of men that any precept of purely religious morality has been heaven-derived. And, to tell the truth, the quality of these imported morals has often been doubtful. Strip the average popular concept of Deity from every anthropomorphic rag, and what remains? Infinity, eternity, and unchangeability—these three, none of them are helps to moral living. And the purely human virtues annexed to the famous definition of God, having come from earth, may continue to survive, and doubtless will, when the particular religion which gave them employment, and perhaps a faint stimulus, has ceased to be. Besides, have not the solely human virtues of the Godhead—those possible, not impossible, to us—been condensed in the form of an incarnate exemplar, whose life yet remains to us as a fair copy? Down to earth earthly virtues must come. From earth they never should have strayed. Clouds and darkness alone must ever surround the Supreme.

It is one of the endless blunders of the popular faith to banish Virtue to the skies, and then to bring her down again, as a poor, faint outline of the supposed heavenly model. There is no virtue absolute—that is, distinguishable as such; no light without the dark to lighten; no purity save in distinctness from the impure; no sinlessness without sin as a foil; no joy or hope save that which springs from sadness or despair.

The stereotyped Religionist will not agree with us. He is no seeker, for one thing, and he has many other reasons of his own for despising us and all our works and thoughts. He may have started in life as a searcher for hidden treasure; but, having found the unsearchable, to his own satisfaction, he is content. Fulness dwells in him, and also the mental lethargy of repletion. What share hath he in any god-like hunger or thirst? Undoubtedly that which he hath attained to is a help to him, in a way: its possession gives him occasion for a jest at the expense of those without a chiselled idol and without a hand-built temple. His worship is, moreover, a popular and fashionable one, for the time being. Let us leave him with his narrow faith, glad that he has any, and that he has not cast that one bright pearl away, and therefore is not wholly poor. He thinks he is "in the spirit" for one whole day in seven, with a holy parsimony, not knowing that spirit folds him round from womb to grave, lives in angel and in worm, and moves and burns and breathes in everything.

Some men reason not together with, but against, the spiritual, in childish fashion, pushing away that "circle of the breast" which feeds them. That which is beyond us, they say, cannot possibly concern us—an amazing statement this to begin with, as if a man should affirm his knowledge the measure of all potential influences, his primer the statute-book of the universe, his stock of coloured slides the total possibilities of the cosmos-show. Others go farther, and contend that, beyond our knowledge and limit of possible knowledge, nothing *is*. It is well to be frank, but not too frank; so other thinkers, more cautious, have effectually limited this latter statement by adding to it, within parentheses, a very feminine postscript, and saying that, in the above circumstances, nothing is (to us). In reality, this saving clause, "to us," has a very considerable meaning—one which is exclusive as well as inclusive. For, although everything within the circle of our present, or possible, knowledge is, in a sense, "to us," it is that which *is* in itself, and yet is not "to us," which contains the riddle. It is in the impossibility gathering round the subtraction, the elimination, of ourselves from the sum of things that all mystery lies. Minus ourselves, the unseen, the invisible, the unknown, were straightway, though viewlessly, manifest. There were revealed that which no man hath seen nor can see. Less that imposed vesture, contributed by ourselves alone, the lay-figure were evident—possibly "apparelled in more precious habit" than we wot of. Less the colour, the music, and the life with which we dower it, what would remain—nay, what remaineth—underneath? What the framework, the substance, indubitably, necessarily, there present, if not *to* us, at least *with* us, which is just as much to the purpose?

It is singular to notice how anxiously the many strive to evade this prime question, even to ridicule it. The ridicule passes, but the ageless question remains. We sleep to confront it, as the addressees of an eternal query. It is part of our lot, and not the lowliest part, as we conceive it, ever to hearken to that mysterious challenge for which we have no password in reply, no speech save that which falters, no recognition save the silence.

G. M. McC.

(*To be concluded.*)

HERBERT SPENCER'S PHILOSOPHY: AN EXPOSITION.

III.

"FIRST PRINCIPLES."

THE RELATIVITY OF ALL KNOWLEDGE.

MANY and miserable have been the attempts to reconcile the so-called "revelation" of the Bible with the real revelation of Nature. Men who are at once adults in theology and children in philosophy have brought to bear upon this subject their Brobdignagian divinity and their Liliputian logic; and, either by making Genesis agree with Geology, or by applying natural law to the spiritual world, have sought to show that particular Christian dogmas are in harmony with particular scientific facts.

It is almost superfluous to say that the Spencerian method is utterly unlike this. Any reconciliation of Religion with Science, to be worthy of the name of reconciliation, must be permanent. It must not be a mere cessation of hostilities—a mere truce. Nor must it be a makeshift arrangement—a patched-up peace. It must be a perfect, a complete, a final reconciliation, based upon the largest and most general fact within man's mental range—a fact forming the root of the Tree of Knowledge, which has Religion for one of its branches and Science for the other.

While seeking out that datum which is to bring about the coalescence of Religion with Science, it will be necessary to make ourselves thoroughly familiar with the philosophical doctrine of the Relativity of all Knowledge. To the consideration of that doctrine we now pass.*

* The symmetry of the argument requires that we should deal first with Ultimate Religious Ideas and with Ultimate Scientific Ideas; but, as we have, in "The Agnostic Annual," covered most of the ground occupied by those two subjects, we do not here purpose to re-traverse that portion of the philosophic territory. Those who have "The Agnostic Annual" may refer to pp. 13-16 of the 1884 issue, and to pp. 30-33 of the 1885 issue. Those who have not will, perhaps, permit us to give a very brief *résumé* of the conclusions there reached. In the former issue we showed that, upon analysis, all religions, including Theism, Pantheism, and Atheism (Atheism comes within the scope of our definition of Religion), while differing very widely from one another as regards almost all special dogmas, are in their assent to the general truth that the power which the universe exhibits

What, then, is meant by the *relativity of knowledge*? By knowledge we mean some internal fact which agrees with some external fact—a state of consciousness which forms the counterpart of a state of nature; and by relativity we mean limitation. So that the relativity of all knowledge may be defined as the limitation of all consciousness. That our intelligence is not absolute is demonstrable in two ways—either by an analysis of the result of our thought, or by an analysis of the method by which we reach this result; either by the *product* or by the *process* of thought. The former is the *objective* proof; the latter the *subjective*. Let us make demonstration doubly secure by proving this truth in both ways.

Taking first the objective demonstration, we cannot do better than cite Spencer's own opulent illustration. "If," he says, "if, when walking through the fields some day in September, you hear a rustle a few yards in advance, and, on observing the ditch-side where it occurs, see the herbage agitated, you will probably turn towards the spot to learn by what this sound and motion are produced. As you approach, there flutters into the ditch a partridge; on seeing which your curiosity is satisfied—you have what you call an *explanation* of the appearances. The explanation, mark, amounts to this: that, whereas through life you have had countless experiences of disturbance among small stationary bodies, accompanying the movement of other bodies among them, and have generalised the relation between such disturbances and such movements, you consider this particular disturbance explained on finding it to present an instance of the like relation. Suppose you catch the partridge, and, wishing to ascertain why it did not escape, examine it, and find at one spot a slight trace of blood upon its feathers. You now *understand*, as you say, what has disabled the partridge. It has been wounded by a sportsman—adds another case to the many cases already seen by you of birds being killed or injured by the shot discharged at them from fowling-pieces; and in assimilating this case to other cases consists your understanding of it. But now, on consideration, a difficulty suggests itself. Only a single shot has struck the partridge, and that not in a vital place. The wings are uninjured, as also are those muscles which move them; and the creature proves by

is an absolute mystery. In the latter issue, applying the same process of analysis, we showed that all our scientific ideas, instead of being cognitions of things, are merely symbols of them; that all our knowledge is representative of a reality which transcends human comprehension, but of which Space, Time, Matter, Motion, and Force are manifestations; and that Science, no less than Religion, proves the existence of that transcendent mystery of which neither can give any adequate explanation. In the present paper, pursuing a very different method, we shall arrive at precisely the same result.

its struggles that it has abundant strength. Why, then, you inquire of yourself, does it not fly? Occasion favouring, you put the question to an anatomist, who furnishes you with *a solution*. He points out that this solitary shot has passed close to the place at which the nerve supplying the wing-muscles of one side diverges from the spine, and that a slight injury to this nerve, extending even to the rupture of a few fibres, may, by preventing a perfect co-ordination in the actions of the two wings, destroy the power of flight. You are no longer puzzled. But what has happened—what has changed your state from one of perplexity to one of *comprehension*? Simply the disclosure of a class of previously-known cases along with which you can include this case. The connection between lesions of the nervous system and paralysis of limbs has been already many times brought under your notice, and you here find a relation of cause and effect that is essentially similar."

This singularly-beautiful illustration leads us, by almost imperceptible gradations, from the most special to the most general, and from the most concrete to the most abstract. Commencing with a particular fact, this first fact is explained by a general fact; and this second fact is made clear by a more general one, and this third fact by one that is more general still; and so on. The initial truth, being purely concrete, is understood as soon as it is merged in a slightly-abstract truth; and this, again, is interpreted as soon as it is merged in a highly-abstract one.

Now, if this process were unlimited—if we could go on perpetually including small groups of phenomena in larger groups, and these larger groups in groups that are larger still, we should finally solve every mystery, and our knowledge would become absolute. But the process must have a limit somewhere. Obviously, our *widest* conception cannot be included in a *wider* conception; for, if it could, we should have a conception *wider than the widest*, which is an absurdity. Manifestly, as our profoundest solution can never be solved, our knowledge is limited or relative.

But the relativity of all knowledge may be established subjectively, as well as objectively.

We cannot think out of relation. To every complete thought there must be a thinker, or a subject; and a thing thought of, or an object. The subject is related to, or limited by, the object; and the object is related to, or limited by, the subject. Without the combination of these two factors there can be no act of thought; and each factor exists only by virtue of its union with the other. The subject is a subject as far as it apprehends an object, *and no farther*; and the object is an object.

as far as it is apprehended by a subject, *and no farther*. The separation of either from the other is the destruction of both, inasmuch as it is the annihilation of consciousness itself. "As an object of consciousness, every thing is necessarily relative ; and what a thing may be out of consciousness no mode of consciousness can tell us."*

Every piece of knowledge, besides implying *relation*, implies *likeness* and *difference*. As Morell† says : "To think a thing is to define it, to mark it off, to say what it agrees with, and what it is distinguished from ; what it is like, and what it is unlike. Where no comparison and no distinction are possible there can be no thought." Let us make this clear by a simple case. Before us is a book, and we are aware of its existence. Now, how do we *know* it to be a book ? Why do we not call it a watch ? Because, having seen books and watches before, we see that it *resembles* that class of things which we have always known as books, and it does *not resemble* that other class of things which we have always known as watches. There is a marked *difference* between the one object and the other. The book is *like* all those objects which we have previously called books, and it is *unlike* all those objects which we have previously called watches. Now, this book can be known as a book only by being distinguished from things that are not books ; and, if the book is to be distinguished from objects that are not books, either it must possess some quality which those other objects do not possess, or it must not possess some quality which those other objects do possess. But in establishing this *relation* between two things we limit both ; and, as limitation is relativity, we establish the relativity of knowledge.

The corollary to be drawn from these facts is as important as it is obvious. If we are to have any knowledge of a Supreme Being, that knowledge must conform to the law of knowledge in general. Just as we cannot think of *thing* in the abstract, but are forced by the eternal limitation of our intelligence to think of *some* thing in particular ; so we cannot conceive of pure *being*, but are forced by the same limitation to conceive of *some* being in particular. As we have found, every conception *necessarily* involves *relation*, *likeness*, *difference*. Without these our ideas would form a perfect chaos. Yet if we apply them to any conception of God, of the First Cause, of the Infinite, of the Absolute, our ideas form a series of perfect contradictions. Examine this point closely. "The First Cause, the Infinite, the Absolute, to be known at all, must be classed. To be positively thought of, it must be thought of as such or such—as of this or that kind. Can it be like in kind to anything of which we have sensible experience ? Obviously not. Between the

* Mansel, "Limits of Religious Thought."

† "Mental Philosophy," part v., chap. 4.

creating and the created there must be a distinction transcending any of the distinctions existing between different divisions of the created." That which is uncaused—and the First Cause must be uncaused ; for, if it is caused, it is caused by something, which something must be the real First Cause—that which is uncaused cannot bear any sort of resemblance to that which is caused. "The Infinite cannot be grouped along with something that is Finite ; since, in being so grouped, it must be regarded as non-infinite. It is impossible to put the Absolute in the same category with anything relative, so long as the Absolute is defined as that of which no necessary relation can be predicated. Is it, then, that the Actual, though unthinkable by classification with the Apparent, is thinkable by classification with itself? This supposition is equally absurd with the other. It implies the plurality of the First Cause, the Infinite, the Absolute ; and this implication is self-contradictory. There cannot be more than one First Cause ; seeing that the existence of more than one would involve the existence of something necessitating more than one, which something would be the true First Cause. How self-destructive is the assumption of two or more Infinities is manifest on remembering that such Infinities, by limiting each other, would become finite. And similarly, an Absolute which existed not alone, but along with other Absolutes, would no longer be an absolute but a relative. The Unconditioned, therefore, as classable neither with any form of the conditioned nor with any other Unconditioned, cannot be classed at all. And to admit that it cannot be known as of such and such kind is to admit that it is unknowable." It follows that the very word *god* involves a conception of the inconceivable and a knowledge of the unknowable. We can define the term only by uniting two terms which cancel each other, and which, therefore, leave us with no definition at all. Thus, God is a *relative-Absolute*, a *finite-Infinite*, a *conditioned-Unconditioned*, an *effected-First-Cause*, a *bounded-Unbounded*, or a *limited-Unlimited*.

But it may be urged that this reasoning is an elaborate method of committing philosophical suicide. The Absolute, in order to be absolute, must of necessity exhibit no *relation* with, no *difference* from, and no *likeness* to anything else ; for, if it exhibits any such relation, any such difference, or any such likeness, it admits of comparison with some other thing, and in thus admitting of comparison it ceases to be absolute and becomes relative. Since, then, any cognition of the Unknowable requires us to compare that of which we are conscious with that of which we are not conscious, and since no comparison is possible except through the consciousness of both its objects, is it not absurd to affirm the existence of the Unknowable? Let us see.

Every piece of knowledge is relative. Yet every argument by which

the relativity of all knowledge is demonstrated distinctly asserts by implication the positive existence of something irrelative or Absolute. To speak of the relative is to imply that there is a non-relative, for correlatives or contradictories can be known only in relation to each other. Thus we cannot conceive of day except as the correlative of night, or of truth except as the correlative of error, or of valley except as the correlative of hill, or of the relative except as the correlative of the absolute. And similarly, there cannot be phenomenon except as the correlative of noumenon. By an immutable law of thought we are bound to think of our knowledge as a knowledge of appearances; yet we cannot think of an appearance without at the same time thinking of a something of which it is an appearance. Appearance apart from reality is unthinkable. So that, while it is certain that we cannot have any conception of *what* the Unknowable is, it is equally certain that we cannot rid ourselves of the consciousness *that* the Unknowable is; and thus the existence of a mystery utterly transcending the powers of the human intellect has the highest warrant of all, since in order to destroy our consciousness of the Unknowable we must destroy consciousness itself.

This deepest and widest of all truths—the truth that the Power which the Universe manifests to us is utterly unscrutable—is the truth which we set out to seek, and it is the truth which reconciles Religion and Science. It is the one truth which all Religion recognises and all Science endorses. It is the truth concerning which all human beings from the most vulgar fetish-worshipper to the most superfine Agnostic, are in tacit harmony; and it is the truth which all Science, from objective Science in its most concrete form to subjective Science in its most abstract form, holds to be impregnable.

How this great verity is to reconcile Religion and Science, which many regard as irreconcilable, we shall see in the next paper.

IGNOTUS.

AGNOSTICISM AND THEISM.

A REPLY TO DR. CARPENTER.

FEW advanced thinkers can consistently traverse the first five of the series of propositions in which Dr. Carpenter defines the intellectual basis of his Theistic belief. The supreme authority and validity of consciousness, the mediate or secondary nature of our knowledge concerning an external world, and the absolute necessity for the practical application in our reasoning processes of the principle of uniformity which is summed up in the aphorism, that like effects infer like causes : these are among the first principles of accredited modern thought, and in embodying them in what is explicitly a vindication of a highly-refined form of Theism Dr. Carpenter makes a very large and important concession to the prevailing and enlightening spirit of the time. When we reach paragraph six, however, further assent is suddenly checked, and with that and the subsequent four theses we are obliged to join strenuous issue.

In paragraph five Dr. Carpenter specifies in brief the principal means by which we infer that a given object is a product of human agency, or, to be more precise, that it has been modified by human art. Say that buried in one of those surface-accumulations common to ancient and extant river-basins, and called by geologists alluvial deposits, we come across a piece of stone bearing a curious resemblance to an axe-head and chipped all over, as if some rude chisel had been used to shape it : a single discovery of this kind would certainly excite surprise and curiosity as to the probable cause of the shape and marks of the stone ; but no one would ever think of connecting it with the past history of our race : there would rather be a consensus of opinion pronouncing the phenomenon to be one of those whimsical freaks of Nature which so often mimic, and sometimes seem to mock, at the industrial genius of man. Suppose, however, that many more stones of the same character should be exhumed from different deposits, and that frequently the stones were found in association with relics of human dwellings and the early industrial art of man : there would be forced upon us a strong suspicion as to the likelihood of there being some relationship or other between these erratic objects and human history ; and if, at length, lodged securely in the side of one of those hollowed-out trunks of trees

or dug-outs which served our primitive ancestors as boats, we found one of the now familiar axe-like stones, every vestige of uncertainty would disappear ; for, putting all the facts of the case together, we should incontinently deduce from them that what we at first took for mere verisimilitude was, after all, the reality, and that this clumsily-fashioned bit of stone owed its peculiar form and impressions, not to the operation of natural forces, but to the intelligence and mechanical skill of man, by whom it had been used as a tool. Now, a concrete instance like this is typical of the fundamental principle of the inductive method, which inculcates homogeneity of thought, or, in other words, that the matter of the conclusion shall be consubstantial, although not necessarily conformable, with the matter of the premises. The paramount spirit of inductive philosophy is embodied in the dictum, that all reasoning ought to proceed from the known to the unknown, and interpret the latter in terms of the former. The case given above is a good example of this, for no very exhaustive analysis of it is required to show that the initial step in the process by which we are carried forward to the conclusion, that the piece of stone has been modified by human intelligence, is our experience of the contriving power of man. We have again and again been witnesses of his utilisation of natural resources, and of his adaptation of them to special ends ; and, in addition to this, we have the infinitely greater assurance which is derived from personal consciousness of ability to modify external objects, by grouping them in new combinations, by introducing new relations, and so forth. All our notions of the operations and concrete effects of intelligent effort are consequently based on the testimony of individual consciousness as to its own acts and on observations of the exoteric manifestations of other human beings. This being so, we quite consistently infer that, wherever in the world we encounter objects with certain distinctive qualities and associations, these objects are products of human intelligence.

The logical process engaged in eliciting results of this sort is one of the soundest and most exact to which human thought is susceptible, and as long as Dr. Carpenter limits its application to phenomena which are obviously within its compass his position is unassailable ; but when, as in paragraph six, the learned Doctor endeavours to extend the principle to things which are totally alien to its function and beyond its scope he exposes himself to a charge of philosophical defection which it will be exceedingly difficult for him to absolve himself from. "On precisely the same grounds," says he—that is, on the assumption which each of us makes as to the co-existence of other conscious beings like ourselves, and as to the purposive character of certain combinations—"I recognise mind and intention in nature." Of course, this is simply a slightly-

improved version of the now superannuated design argument. There are marks of design in nature; therefore, there must be a designing intelligence. As an extraordinary example of tautology, nothing could be more instructive; as a case of vicious logical form, nothing could be worse. Let us concede Dr. Carpenter's premise. Assume that there are evidences of mind and intention in nature; we have seen that all our knowledge respecting mental action is derived from the testimony of consciousness to its own states, or on observation of external manifestations in others. When, accordingly, we predicate the action of mind in reference to any phenomenon, or series of phenomena, we must mean one of two things: either the mind by which the phenomena were or are affected is the same in kind as, although perhaps differing in degree from, the human mind, or it is neither the same in kind nor degree as the latter. Since the second alternative is too monstrous even to dally with, we are obliged to revert to the first. If the mind whose intention is to be discerned in nature is the same in essence as our own, there immediately emerges a very delicate, but quite relevant, question. All the data in our possession as to mental states conspire to prove that such states always occur in concomitance with certain well-defined physical states—indeed, every mental condition has a physical analogue, and conversely. Upon this point there is no more eminent and instructive authority than Dr. Carpenter himself. Both in his monumental work on “Human Physiology” and in his standard book on “Mental Physiology” he has described, with great clearness and force, the various phases of the subtle and inscrutable interaction of mind and body. The amount and quality of the blood coursing through the encephalic capillaries, the structure of the brain substance, the action of physical agents from without—all these and many other exclusively physical conditions have not only an indirect influence, but a positively specific action, on the mind and its processes. The facts vouched for by Dr. Carpenter are such as to afford the strongest warranty for the conclusion that, wherever subjective phenomena in any way like our own exist, there also there must of necessity be correlative physical phenomena.

Travelling along these lines of thought, we are brought face to face with an ultimatum, which I have good reason to know is distasteful to Dr. Carpenter, and that is, that, if the mind whose operations he believes are to be seen in nature exists at all, it can only exist in connection with an organ—that is, with a brain; but, inasmuch as a mind of the scope of the one in the existence of which Dr. Carpenter believes would require an organ of tremendous dimensions—a brain, that is, filling all space, to the exclusion of everything else—it is certain that, in virtue of the terms of his own argument, it cannot exist. As Clifford once trenchantly put it in Dr. Carpenter's hearing, much, as the latter

tells us, to his horror : "There is no room in the universe for ghosts." Dr. Carpenter may protest against this *reductio ad absurdum*, because it is not original. He may even assure us that its fallaciousness has been exposed over and over again. I do not think so. Professor Flint affects to treat it with derision ; but he does not dispose of the difficulty that it raises ; and that the problem is no imaginary one is sufficiently proved when we remember that it has presented itself as insuperable to such commanding intellects as those of Du Bois Raymond and W. K. Clifford. It is simply the necessary product of the logical method employed.

The contention of paragraph seven is implicitly confuted by the preceding argument ; and I may remark upon Dr. Carpenter's allusion to the unity of Nature as a testimony in favour of the personal causation of the order of things that the fact of the interrelation of phenomena and their fundamental continuity—a fact to which every fresh discovery and advance in science imparts profounder significance and force—only serves to strengthen and confirm the great generalisation, that all cosmic phenomena may be referred to the interaction of the two permanent elements amid all permutations—viz., matter and force. But, insists Dr. Carpenter, given matter and force, and granting the truth of Evolution, surely there must still have been a genesis of things ; for even "an arithmetical or geometrical progression involves the conception of a first term and a factor." It must be evident that there is here an attempt to compare things that are different. The first term and the factor are relative denominations. A first cause, of all things, is unconditioned, and, therefore, absolute and infinite. Herbert Spencer has portrayed with a master-hand the embarrassments and intricacies, the contradictions and monstrosities, with which this pseudo-idea bristles, so that I need not dwell upon it.

"If it takes *mind* to construe the world, how can it require the negation of mind to constitute it?" The answer is simple, and has already been vouchsafed in this paper. The mind that contemplates and interprets Nature is subject to certain physical conditions. It is impossible that an Infinite Mind can exist under similar conditions, for the existence of such an intelligence would exclude the existence of the universe. If, therefore, there is a mind in the cosmos, it possesses no element in common with the constitution of the human mind, and is not mind in our acceptance of the term at all. Our final frame of thought towards the subject will accordingly be one of pure Agnosticism.

There is not much to deal with in paragraph ten, the contents of which, as regards its value, is contingent upon what goes before. Dr. Carpenter is impelled to a belief in the purposive causation of phenomena by the wonderful order and unity which he observes in Nature.

The Agnostic is struck and profoundly impressed by the same fact ; but, unlike Dr. Carpenter, he does not seek to explain it by an assumption which is itself more inexplicable than the thing it purports to explain. Confronted at every turn with the stupendous and impassable mysteries of being, the Agnostic at length, not without much reluctance and chagrin, takes to heart the bitterest, and yet most salutary, lesson that man is called upon to learn ; and that is, that while his faculties of mind and powers of body may properly concern themselves with the study and adjustment of many things, there still remain heights which the loftiest powers of mind can never scale and depths which not even the longest plummet line of reason can ever sound.

J. P. GILMOUR.

INDIAN AND GREEK MYTHOS.

(From the German of Rückert.)

OF goddesses sprung from the sea
 India hath fifty million and three,
 In the mythos of Hindostan
 Apsarasians is their name :
 They are goddesses of Love—
 Other goddesses above.
 One goddesses of Love Greek mythos can claim,
 And from the ocean her reign began :
 Her famous name Aphrodite won
 From Aphros, Foam, as the mighty host
 Of Apsarasians a name can boast,
 From Ap, the Water, so legends run.
 Those goddesses fifty millions and three
 From the humid mire majestic rose,
 In gorgeous garments all arrayed,
 In gems which afar their glitter displayed ;
 But the goddess of Greece, with her hair's rich flows,
 Stood in naked beauty beside the sea.
 Indian goddesses, all and each,
 And each and all with your gems and gold,
 Your silks and velvets of price untold,
 Your blaze of tints, I, you beseech,
 That one Goddess of Love to bow before,
 Who herself bends low as if shame to adore !
 It is thus that I, as a judge, should speak
 Were I judge to be between Indian and Greek.

WILLIAM MACCALL.

DARWIN'S BIRTHDAY.

ON February 12th, in the year 1809, was born, at Shrewsbury, Charles Robert Darwin, now known throughout the civilised globe as the author of "The Origin of Species." His father, Dr. R. W. Darwin, F.R.S., left behind a reputation as a physician superior to that of other men of his time. His mother bore the name of Wedgewood, being a daughter of the well-known Josiah Wedgewood. I am told by an inhabitant of Shrewsbury that Darwin's father earned and left behind him an immense fortune. Darwin was sent to the Grammar School of his town, at the head of which was Dr. Butler, afterwards Bishop of Lichfield. While writing, the old school is being prepared for public opening as a Free Public Library and Museum. No fitter purpose could have been suggested. An acquaintance of mine (a magistrate) gave £100 towards the purchase of the old school for the use of the public. It would have been a national Darwin memorial, only the sum required was subscribed locally. It is possible that, in front of the building, there may be erected a statue of Charles Darwin, and inside, if my suggestion be acted upon, there will be a division of the Reference Library for the reception of Darwinian literature. The ever-growing interest that would attach to such a collection of writings by different men of various nations may be learned from the success of the Shakespeare collection at the Birmingham Reference Library, which now numbers over 6,000 different publications, and before the fire over 7,000. I am informed that a Bibliograph of Darwin is being formed, which already furnishes a list of 7,000 publications. What figures will represent the accumulation on the three hundredth anniversary of the birth of the great Naturalist no man can foretell. That it will be increased enormously as time rolls on, there can be no manner of doubt.

The facts connected with Darwin's early life may not be important; at any rate, none have as yet been disclosed. It being intended that he should follow the profession of his father, we find him sent to Edinburgh in 1825, the best of medical schools at that time. This appears to have made his prospect in the medical profession so distasteful to him that he was speedily removed to Cambridge to study for the Church. The time he devoted to prepare himself as a curer of bodies was evidently short; for he says, "I went to Cambridge early in 1828," presumably to become a curer of souls. He took his B.A. in 1831, and his

M.A. in 1837. It would seem that his ambition to become a clergyman was not greater than his ambition to become a doctor. His master, Professor Henslow, took him on field excursions, and it is related that the first time he saw his name in print was as the capturer of an insect. In the course of less than ten years the physician and the theologian in embryo appeared as a Naturalist, and, as such, was engaged to go on a surveying voyage round the world in "The Beagle" with Captain Fitzroy. Three years after his return he married; and, in 1842, we find him settled at Down, in Kent, where he died forty years after. It is pleasant to learn that his home was happy during the whole of that forty years. There was something prophetic in his father's objection to his going on the now famous voyage, that he thought it might unsettle his son's mind as to entering the Church. To some of us such a terrible disaster was a consummation devoutly to be wished.

And what manner of man was this whose memory we celebrate? According to Professor Huxley, he was like unto Socrates in his desire to find some one wiser than himself. According to Dr. Romanes, he painted his own portrait in his letter describing the character of his Cambridge master, Professor Henslow, as having "accurate powers of observation, sound sense, and cautious judgment predominant." He had a brilliant wit, which had the advantage of being good-natured. He seems to have impressed every one with his gentle, good-tempered, and genial manner, so that through the man of science and the philosopher there shone the ray which disclosed the gentleman. Of course, all these traits of character may be found where there is neither science nor philosophy. But in one who seemed to take all knowledge as his province, who gave laws to the world of biology and revolutionised men's thoughts, winning manners, forgetfulness of self, and equal consideration for the highest and the lowest imparted a charm to social intercourse not always found in the presence of genius.

The admirers of Shakespeare and Burns, the heroes of poetry and song, annually rehearse the story of their lives, dwelling always on their gentleness, candour, and manliness. The use of this is to foster similar virtues in those who honour them. Simplicity, patience, candour, and unremitting exertion in the search for truth through all nature makes the memory of Charles Darwin a lesson for all men and all time. It is not the fact of being born, but the achievements during life, that create the interest we feel in the days that gave birth to men of genius. No more fitting days could be chosen to celebrate and praise the men who adorn their species and give new life to thought and truth. The justification of hero-worship for keeping the memory of men fresh and green is that it stimulates the living and pays in some measure our indebtedness to those who lived for others, who added to our knowledge.

and who left the world richer and better than they found it. No doubt all the months of the years running through the ages have added to our stock of distinguished men ; but February bears record of births the world counts worthy of remembrance. Among them may be found the names of Galileo, Volney, Voltaire, Montaigne, Bentham, Dickens, Longfellow, Lamb, Washington, Handel, Renan, Victor Hugo, and Ernest Haeckel, the living and brilliant advocate of views in common with those of Darwin.

The work Darwin did bore fruit during his life, and to a much greater extent than he anticipated. Although not qualified to form an estimate of it, I may, perhaps, be pardoned for humbly placing one before my readers, in the words of men who have authority to speak on the subject. In brief notices which appeared immediately after his death, Darwin's work in Geology, Botany, Zoology, and Psychology was estimated by Messrs. Geikie, Dyer, and Romanes. In one of his early papers on Geology Darwin refers to the formation of mould in 1840. The last book he wrote after forty years was on the same subject. His paper on the glacial period stands almost at the top of the long list of the contributions to the history of the Ice Age. It was not till "The Origin of Species" appeared that the great body of geologists became conscious of the essentially fragmentary character of the geological record. Geikie also considers "Coral Reefs" would have placed Darwin in the front rank of investigators if he had written nothing else. To the immortal name of Darwin he traces the impetus given to the view that Evolution is the law of geological history.

In Botany, after making all allowances, Mr. Dyer says it is not too much to say that each of Darwin's botanical investigations would have made the reputation of any ordinary botanist. Before the "Origin" was published the idea of plant distribution was held in subordination to the idea that plants were permanent and special creations ; and it was generally believed that all migrations took place under conditions of land and sea now prevailing.

In Zoology, Dr. Romanes regards Darwin's influence as greater than that of any other individual naturalist. His greatness is not to be estimated by his conception of the idea of natural selection. "His claim to everlasting memory rests upon the many years of devoted labour, whereby he tested this idea in all conceivable ways, amassing facts from every department of science, balancing evidence with the soundest judgment shirking no difficulty, and at last astonishing the world, as with a revelation, by publishing the completed proof of Evolution. Indeed, so colossal is Mr. Darwin's greatness in this respect that we doubt whether there ever was a man so well fitted to undertake the work which he has so successfully accomplished." The same writer refers to his influence

on psychology and to the limited extent of his writings on mental science. Mr. Darwin lent him the original drafts of these essays, and he found with them notes and memoranda collected during forty years, out of which he published the compressed results. His chapters on the mental powers of man, as compared with lower animals, were regarded by the late Professor Clifford as "the simplest, and clearest, and most profound philosophy that was ever written on the subject." In reference to the origin of the moral sense, Mr. Darwin found it impossible to pass it over, and he believed his to be the first attempt to approach the subject from the side of natural history. He enters the mysterious realm of the mental world as a naturalist, as a scientific man, by seeking to interpret the facts derivable from observation, experience, and comparison, as illuminated by ordinary common sense. The professors who claim the mental world as all their own, whose theories are built in the air, and whose doctrines begin and end in words, will not readily forgive or forget the trespasser Darwin on their domain. Many and great have been the attempts to turn him out of the fold. It was the fate of Aristotle to have his work protected by law in one generation and to have it burnt in another. But truth, arrived at by natural process, having observed facts for its basis, will prevail against all rumours of wrath, past or to come.

Have I not, then, shown cause for holding high festival on this seventy-sixth anniversary of the birth of one who contributed so much new thought? Professor Huxley writes that, the more one knew of him, the more he seemed the incorporated ideal of a man of science; and what most impressed those who knew him was "a certain intense and almost passionate honesty by which all his thoughts and actions were irradiated, as by a central fire."

Emerson teaches that great men exist that there may be greater men; that the destiny of organised nature is amelioration, not in succession, but by rotation. "When nature removes a great man people explore the horizon for a successor; but none comes, and none will. In some other and quite different field the next man will appear." Be it so; then we rejoice over what we have had, and honour to-day the immortal memory of Charles Darwin.

CHARLES C. CATTELL.

THE POPULAR RELIGIOUS FAITH.

THIRD PAPER.

WE showed in the February number of the *Agnostic* that the first Church of Jerusalem, presided over by the Apostle James the Less, and afterwards by his brother Simeon—the Church specially guided by the Holy Ghost in the hour of danger to Pella, to keep alive the pure faith after the destruction of Jerusalem—was Nazarine, or, as we should now say, “Arian,” in doctrine. This highly-favoured Church utterly rejected the dogma about the divinity of Jesus, as contrary to the Apostolic teaching; and, as for the new apostle, Paul, they looked on him as an apostate who had corrupted the faith, and whose teaching was to be shunned.

Turn we now to Alexandria, another stronghold of Apostolic Christianity. The Church here was founded, or was said to have been founded, by Mark, the supposed evangelist. Mark, we are told by Papias, was the mouthpiece of Peter; and, if we may believe the Bishop of Hierapolis, the “Gospel according to Mark” was, in reality, the “Gospel according to Peter.” Mark had as much to do with it as a Jewish scribe with the Mosaic Pentateuch, or Mr. Gladstone’s secretary with Mr. Gladstone’s despatches. Here, however, we may confidently expect to find the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Here we have the fruits of Peter the apostle and Mark the evangelist, and the trees of their planting must have borne fruit beyond suspicion. But, in order to make assurance doubly sure, we are informed that Apollos and Barnabas watered these trees and tended these fruits to prevent any weeds growing, any dead branches from cankering the living plants, or any unkindly grape from spreading its pernicious moisture on the healthy clusters.

Barnabas, the Levite, it will be remembered, was a native of Cyprus, and, for a time, he was the companion of Paul in his travels. Like Paul, he was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and when Paul, after his epileptic fit, became a Christian, it was Barnabas who introduced him to the Apostles (Acts ix. 26, 27). This Barnabas travelled with Paul, as we said, on a missionary tour; but the two quarrelled and separated, when Paul went on to Asia Minor and Barnabas to Cyprus, with his nephew, Mark (Acts xiii.–xv).

Apollos was likewise a primitive disciple. It does not seem that his teaching was in accordance with that of Paul, as the Corinthians were divided into Apollosians and Paulites. Some said, I am of Paul ; and others said, I am of Apollos (1 Cor. iii. 4-7), as much as to say there were two sects at the time in Corinth, so different in doctrine that they separated into the Church of Paul and the Church of Apollos. Jerome tells us that Paul, who quarrelled with Barnabas, Mark, and Peter, now quarrelled with Apollos, who was obliged to leave Corinth, and that he went to Crete first, but subsequently to Alexandria.

Here, then, we have a three-fold cord, at least—Mark, Barnabas, and Apollos. If orthodoxy existed anywhere in the earth, surely it should be found in Alexandria. Be it remembered that Alexandria was no barbarian city ; it was not a city of rude, uneducated Scythians, wholly incapable of understanding what was told them. It was the most learned and polished city of the world. Its inhabitants were Greeks and Jews. The Ptolemies were great patrons of literature and learned men. Here, then, learning and intelligence of the highest order would be brought to bear on any subject worthy of notice. The museum of Alexandria was an eighth wonder, and the library was wholly unrivalled. In this crowded city we have, therefore, the best elements of truth—evangelists and apostles as teachers, scholars and men of education as hearers. It was like the Primate of Canterbury and the Archbishop of York preaching to the House of Commons. Mark, Barnabas, and Apollos were the teachers, and the learned Alexandrians were the taught. If anywhere “the faith as it is in Jesus” can be found on earth, it must be here. Here, at any rate, the teachers were wise to know, and the hearers wise to understand. And what is the fact? Christianity flourished in Alexandria. But what Christianity? Was it the Christianity of the Western Church? Was it Catholic or Protestant Christianity—the Christianity of our Parliament Churches of England and Scotland, the Christianity of Ireland, the Christianity of the Pope of Rome, or that of John Calvin, or that of Martin Luther? No ; a thousand times no ! Alexandria, like Pella, was the stronghold of what Catholics and Protestants call the “Arian heresy.” Heresy, indeed ! What is the correct way of stating the fact? Not that these primitive Christians fell away from Rome, but that the Western Church fell away from the “faith” of Pella and Alexandria. Catholics and Protestants are the heretics ; Pella and Alexandria the orthodox Churches. It must be so, or the Apostles did not know what Christianity is—did not know the nature and teaching of Jesus—so well as Chrysostom and Athanasius did.

There is something so profoundly absurd in the charge of heresy against the disciples of James the apostle and Mark the evangelist

that it seems well-nigh incredible. Athanasius (296-373) and Chrysostom (347-407) must have been, indeed, arrogant and egotistical to set up their opinions in opposition to the views of the disciples of James and Mark. These Fathers did not live till centuries afterwards, when the Church had fallen away from its original simplicity and purity—when a regular hierarchy had been established, dogmatic, priestly, and fond of mystery. They were one-sided disciples—disciples of one section of the Church—viz., the Western “heresy;” the other side—viz., the Eastern Church—being at the time* dead against them. We all know, when a split is made, how the separatists ride their hobby to death. At first the difference is small, a division is made; and this wee difference grows into a mountain, and becomes the paramount doctrine of the new sect. The “Son of Man” of the first three Gospels was transformed into the “Son of God.” If the son of God, then Mary, his mother, was the mother of God. If Mary was the mother of God, she was without sin and without death, the penalty of sin. And, if so, her assumption follows as a natural consequence. Then, going back to the dogma that Jesus was the “Son of God,” he must have had a pre-existing state. He must have been God. He must be co-equal and co-eternal. And, as the Lord God is one God, this second God must be one with the Father. If one with the Father, he must have been the creator of the world; he could not die, but must be alive for evermore.

It will be perceived how the circle logically enlarges, and the new Christ is not the Jesus of Bethlehem and Nazareth, but the Q. E. D. of logical syllogisms. This was the Western Church. The Eastern Church stopped short of all this—took the three Gospel histories as they stood before they were corrupted to confirm the Western theological logic; and, as years rolled on, the gulf became broader and deeper, till neither side could pass over it. From the hour of separation the special logical inferences of the Western Church have grown in strength and number, till logic has taken the place of theology, and “it must be so” has assumed the place of plain history.

The Eastern Church remained, till the reign of Theodosius at the close of the fourth century, pretty well firm to the primitive Church of Jerusalem, built up by James and his brother Simeon; which again minutely resembled the primitive Church of Alexandria, built up by Mark, Barnabas, and Apollos. The Western Church concocted a logical gospel of its own, and lorded it over God’s heritage as the

* The first three councils of Constantinople, held in 336, 339, and 360, ratified Arianism as the only true faith. Constantine the Great, the “nursing father of the Church,” was an out-and-out Arian. It was Theodosius who “reformed” the Greek Church—a very strange and dubious authority, to say the least. His strong argument was a pitchfork.

Romans lorded it over the governments of the world. It was a purely dogmatic Church, built up by the hierarchy. It was a schismatic Church, which rent the seamless robe in two, and in which the dicta of Council and Pope over-rode the canonical writings. It could not be otherwise. There is nothing about immaculate conception, nothing about assumption, nothing about the pre-existence, nothing about the Trinity, nothing about purgatory, in the first three Gospels, at any rate. These are all inferences—deductions from theological lemmas, Western “consistencies” introduced long after the canon of Scripture was sealed up, and some of them but of yesterday.

It is nonsense to say that the Western Church separated because they upheld truth against error. Who was the judge? Certainly not the Eastern Church. The separatists themselves, and they only. And, let me ask, is it even credible that truth and error should be geographical—all the East being one and all the West the other? If truth had anything to do with the matter, should we not have found some of the Eastern people and some of the Western maintaining the right, and only some involved in error? But this is not the case. Rome had advanced a claim of superiority. It had arrogated to itself dictatorial power; it had taken the side of Paul, right or wrong. Paul was their evangelist, and they were for ever interpolating Scripture to make it more and more the witness of their peculiar views. Forgery was the essence of the Western Church. Origen makes no hesitation in saying that lies are quite justifiable if thereby the Church is strengthened. False miracles were daily practised to delude the foolish. With false decretals they bolstered up their false doctrines and practices. With lying teachers they propagated their views. Who can place the least reliance on such a system of deception? They blush not to own their decretals to be forgeries; but, seeing they are in defence of their dogmas, they cling to them still.

The Western Church is a schismatic Church, and the Anglican Church is part of the Western; and so are all “orthodox” Protestants, whether in England, Germany, America, or elsewhere. All that has been done by our Parliamentary Church, and by Protestants generally, is to leave out some of the grossest practices and most glaring absurdities of the Church of Rome—as allowing the clergy to marry, instead of keeping concubines; to forbid the worship of images, to abolish the scandal of the confessional, to disown the rank and power of the Virgin Mary, to abjure the dogma of purgatory, to scoff the notion of a Bank of Merit, which can be drawn upon by any creditor in favour of another whose debt overbalances his good deeds; and to forbid indulgences. These are the chief reforms; in other respects there is little choice and little difference between Romanism and Anglicanism.

Without passing any opinion at all on the truth or untruth of the teaching of Jesus, one thing appears certain : if you would know what it was that he taught, you must search for it in the earliest Church, established by his own chosen apostles and first disciples. To two of such Churches reference has been made—the Church of Pella and the Church of Alexandria. Both these Churches were in accord. Both believed in the “Man Christ Jesus,” but denied that the “Son of Man” was the “Son of God.” Both believed Mary and Joseph the carpenter to be the parents of Jesus ; both would have laughed at the notion of the Immaculate Conception ; both would have been horrified at the dogmas that Mary was the mother of God and spouse of the Holy Ghost, born without sin, and taken up to heaven without dying. There was no doctrine of the Trinity in the Churches founded by James the apostle and Mark the evangelist ; no belief in the Logos spoken of in the fourth Gospel—a Logos which first created the world and was then born into it ; which first made his mother and was then born of her ; as if a bird first made its nest and then laid its eggs, and, after that, was itself hatched, in its own nest, from its own eggs.

It is readily admitted that much of the morality of the Gospel teaching is most excellent—that many of the logia of Jesus are truly beautiful ; but the mysteries or mystical doctrines of the Western Church are sad innovations, which render Christianity “to the Greek foolishness,” and to the thoughtful a stone of stumbling. Nor does Paul improve the case when he asks, “Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world ?” “Not many wise,” he adds, “are called.” To put his words into axiomatic English, we should say : “The greater the fool, the better the Christian.” Whether such an axiom is sound divinity, judge ye. We are told that God is all-wise, and that Christians will be like him ; but the stultification of wisdom, the aiming at folly, the dishonouring of reason, the rejection of the wise and noble, is a funny way, to say the least, of making oneself wise unto salvation, of making oneself all-wise, like the all-wise in whom is no folly at all.

JULIAN.

TWO CHAPTERS FROM THE EVANGEL OF PANONTISM.

I.—THE PAGANISM OF MACCHIAVELLI.

THEY who have read the whole works of Macchiavelli must have been astonished to find some of them, especially the "Discourses on Livy," far more interesting than the two books by which Macchiavelli is best known out of Italy, and one of which has been so variously, and often so unjustly, judged. Few more solid and suggestive productions than the "Discourses on Livy;" and, assuredly, none others can give us such rich insight into the very heart of Roman greatness. In the "Discourses" we meet more than brilliant genius, marvellous sagacity; we also meet the old Roman, the old Pagan spirit, which has never died in Italy, and by which Macchiavelli was supremely animated. Italy, though the centre of Catholic Christendom, has always been more a Pagan than a Christian country. Christianity in Italy is a transfigured, or disfigured, Paganism; and it was by political skill of the Roman type that the Popes rose to be sovereign masters of the nations. Though so many centuries sever the two men, it is as the contemporary of Scipio Africanus that Macchiavelli unveils to us Rome's military organisation and political mechanism. He who would know what the Roman soldier was in the best and bravest days of Rome must read the "Discourses." The Roman soldier was not an idler, as in modern times, but the hardest of toilers. His fare was simple, and he had no stronger drink than vinegar and water. His employments, such as the formation of camps, left him no time for vice. As the Roman matron had the noblest dignity, the Roman father had a stern and despotic authority, which could be, and often was, exercised with caprice and cruelty. Fulvius, the son of a Senator, was put to death by his father for being connected with the Catilinarian Conspiracy. Trained, accustomed to un murmuring submission, under his father's roof, the Roman soldier was obedient to his commander as to a father. What a potent aid this must have been in establishing and enforcing discipline! But discipline did not make the Roman soldier forget that he was a Roman citizen. It was Roman citizens, through obedience, order, and diligence, admirable machines, yet with a plenitude of instinctive life, who conquered the world. The poison of Greek sophistry, stealing into the Roman blood, excited thirst for the cup of Oriental luxury, and all Roman

virtues perished along with Roman frugality and temperance. Perchance, alike from his character and his system, Macchiavelli did not see enough of the moral basis on which Roman majesty rested ; for the political discernment, just as much as the martial valour, of the Romans had a moral source.

II.—SEEKERS AFTER GOD.

A pictorial twaddler of the present day has devoted a volume to Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius, whom he calls Seekers after God. These poor Pagans had a grand and simple creed, were not acquainted with that heterogeneous and hideous mass known by the name of the Bible, or with the chaos of monstrosities denominated orthodoxy ; therefore, they are much to be pitied ! They had not been taught that God, hiding himself from the rest of the universe, had revealed himself to a savage horde, which burst from an Asiatic desert to rob and to murder, to lay waste fair lands, to spread desolation. Hapless souls ! How we must mourn their fate ! Though they proclaimed the sublimest virtues and urged their brethren to live the most godlike life, they are not less deserving of compassion on that account ; for orthodoxy scorns morality, and would have us imitate the example of saints like David, the most lustful, the most cruel, the most treacherous of men, but who had a prodigious store of something named Faith, which has always been found an extremely useful article when any one wanted to steal his neighbour's goods or to cut his neighbour's throat. When a prating, pretentious Anglican pedant lavishes his commiseration on the greatest, the wisest, the best men of antiquity for being ignorant of certain doctrines, fatuous or degrading, he is guilty of the grossest impertinence, though, possibly, he is as imbecile as he is impudent ; and the most loathsome kind of impudicity is that of absolute cretinism. It is true, as has been said, that God is not far from every one of us. But there can be no question here of the comparative and the superlative. We are ideally near to God, in the degree that we think or feel that we are near to him. By mystical rapture, however, or heroic endeavour, we are really no nearer to God than the worm which crawls at our feet, than the swallow, than the butterfly. The belief in special or supernatural revelations we should not ridicule or condemn as long as it is a genuine belief ; for then it assimilates universal elements, or is absorbed by them. Every creed which has a catholic influence has a catholic nature. Hence the nobleness and the effulgent invincibility of the mediæval religions, and even of Protestantism in its earlier manifestations. But when the belief in special or supernatural revelations is a kind of epileptic or rachitic reminiscence ; when there is loud and incessant

theological babblement, but no religious vitality, special or supernatural revelations are bigotries, blasphemies, impostures. But, perhaps, it is foolish to take the matter too seriously. This Anglican manufacturer of bombastic phrases, seasoned with the old preposterous fallacies, is a species of unconscious jester. He is a ghastly, yet comical, figure in a Dance of Death. Christianity had a celestial mission to fulfil; but Christianity is dead, though it has left a treasure of holy ecstasies and beautiful phantasies. Dull, clumsy, shameless harlequins gibber and gesticulate at the grave of Christianity, and pretend to evoke its spirit, and, with greedy hands, demand solid coin for a very silly exhibition. Seekers after God! Seneca, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius found God, if ever he can be found at all. About moral loftiness there can never be any controversy. But men dispute and must dispute for ever about their relations to the Eternal and Ineffable Mystery. In any case, it will be difficult to persuade us that a converted Hottentot is nearer to God than a profound philosopher who is himself divine.

WILLIAM MACCALL.

MAN: WHENCE AND WHITHER?*

(Continued.)

Is it not possible—nay, even extremely probable—that, under the irresistible pressure of civilised man, his immediate precursor may have become extinct? All the human races that now tend to bridge the interval between the highest man and the highest ape are fast becoming extinct under this very pressure. The gulf widens, and will widen. The Caribs and Tasmanians have passed away, while the Australians, New Zealanders, aboriginal Americans, Eskimo, and others, are fast following in their wake, and this all in a comparatively short space of time. There is undoubtedly now a far greater physical and mental interval between the Hottentot woman and such men as Gladstone and Darwin than between the Hottentot and an ape. It is a fact beyond dispute that man was not in such a high state of development ages gone by as at present. The earliest traces of man exhibit him to us in the Palæolithic, or old stone, age, as wild and living in caves, using only the rudest stone implements with which to battle with the ferocious monsters around him. His jaw was then prognathous, like the ape, and his body large and powerful.

In the limestone caverns of France have been discovered the fossil remains of men who inhabited caves and belonged to the Palæolithic, or early Pleistocene, period. Together with these troglodytes, or cave-dwellers, were rough, unpolished stone implements and weapons, denoting a low state of civilisation. Other caves, in later strata, give us lighter stone weapons, of better finish, and occasionally horn dart-points, such as would be used for catching smaller game. Numbers of skin-scrapers also were found, suggesting the idea that the people used the hides of animals for clothing, instead of going naked, as their ancestors. The hairy character of the body would be probably giving place to a finer, smoother, and more delicate outer skin, which would necessitate clothing of some kind. Still later we find implements altogether of flint, lancet-shaped, admirably-proportioned, and of three sizes, adapted for arrow, javeline, and lance points respectively, and

* A paper read on October 20th, 1884, at Channing Hall, and on November 3rd, 1884, at Cutlers' Hall, Sheffield; illustrated with diagrams.

designed to be fitted to wooden and bone shafts. After these appear arrows and darts of deer's horn and bone, and stone and flint tools, which were used for making these arrows. We also find such implements as bone awls and needles for piercing and sewing skins, arrow-heads furnished with barbs on each side, and harpoons barbed on one side only.

Now was man's intellect fairly on the swing; but still he was, as yet, only in the Palæolithic period, for not one polished implement nor fragment of pottery is found in their stations. They were surrounded by ferocious carnivora, which sometimes fell victims to their weapons. The mammoth still tenanted the valleys, and the reindeer was the common article of food. They were hunters, possessed of the rudest modes of existence, and with but little of what is now called civilisation.

In Britain the troglodyte man was contemporary with the mammoth, rhinoceros, lion, and hyena, none of which existed in the later Pleistocene era; but there have been no perfect skeletons found here like those in France. Human *bones*, however, have been discovered in various deposits, together with the skeletons of long-extinct animals. The best British human fossil is the portion of an upper jaw containing four teeth, from Kent's Cavern. Hermetically sealed in stalagmite, deposited on the floor of the cavern by water dropping from the roof, this jaw lay *below* the remains of extinct mammals; while beneath all were bone and stone implements of human workmanship, equally firmly fixed in a natural limestone cement. Geology fixes the date of this troglodyte at the early Palæolithic period, and it is beyond doubt that man existed at this remote period, or even earlier, on the earth, for a human skull was found in the delta of the Mississippi beneath *four* different layers of forest growth, which must have formed part of a living human being 50,000 years since. The celebrated Neanderthal skull, of which so much has been heard, certainly belongs to the mammoth age, if not earlier; and, if it represent a race, and not merely an individual, that race would lie in a position intermediate between the lowest man and the highest ape. It *may* only represent a man of peculiar formation, as we often see men in the present day deformed or of eccentric build; and, therefore, we cannot look upon it *positively* as the "missing link." One other similar find, however, would for ever settle the question, and proclaim to the world that the "missing link" was, at last, found. In capacity, the cranium is human, while the superciliary arches and the brow are distinctly ape-like. Professor Huxley sums up his examination of this skull with the remark that "the Neanderthal skull is, of human remains, that which presents the most marked and definite characters of a lower type."

Following the Palæolithic era, or rude stone age, is the Neolithic,

or new stone, age; and now we find man using polished weapons, making pottery, using fire to warm himself with, and developing social manners. Instead of living in caves, he lived in lake dwellings, with others of his species, and gradually developed agricultural tastes. This metamorphosis, we know from the fossil remains found deposited in various strata, occupied a long period of time, probably thousands of years; and even then we are left thousands of years before the historical era, which followed the bronze and iron ages. Compare these men with those who lived in the Grecian and Egyptian eras, and again compare these latter with ourselves, and the record is one of trial and failure through long ages, and of experiment crowned at last by attainment. Has not the invention of the steam-engine alone been a means of extending man's dominion in a marvellous manner? Think what has been achieved through electricity! There has, undoubtedly, been a continued struggle from barbarism to civilisation, and the little we know of the early history of man tells us that he lived the life of a wild beast, leaving no impression on the earth save one of the victims of his well-aimed stone or flint-pointed spear.

So much for the "missing link." There is one other point to be settled before we have completed the sequence of evolution, which commences with the condensation of the nebulous vapour and terminates with the development of man; and that is the question of how life originated. We have found that the first dawn of life was in the form of a simple speck of bioplasm, void of any structure; and that this primordial germ, which we call a Moneron, was developed in the earliest period of deposition of stratified rock at the bottom of the sea, and is now being constantly developed as of old. Now, if the theory of evolution be not mere talk, this primordial germ must have been spontaneously evolved from inanimate matter, for the theory allows of no break, being a gradual unfolding of phenomena. We are told that there is no experience in nature of such a development. Perhaps so; but that is no argument against it. There is no experience in nature of any special creation either; so why fly to this alternative, which is the only one presented to us, instead of adopting the theory which agrees so harmoniously with the whole evolutionary process? Why make this abrupt break in the chain of sequence? Does it not annihilate completely the whole theory of evolution? It is not more wonderful that life should be evolved from inanimate nature than that man should be evolved from a structureless bioplasm. The continuity of evolution once broken, why may it not be broken again and again?

If we are to accept the theory of evolution, we are bound to admit that animate was evolved from inanimate matter. And the difficulty of this admission is not, after all, so great as appears at first sight; for

who is to say whether such a condition really exists as inanimate matter? It is a fact that every particle of matter in nature is in a state of active motion; every molecule and atom is constantly active. And why is this not life as much as the animal or vegetable, though in a modified degree of development? Evolution, if it mean anything, should admit this; and I will show you that it does not admit it only, but absolutely declares that it is so. In the first place, it must be recollected that Balfour Stewart, and all other physical and chemical scientists, declare that every thing in nature is composed of molecules and atoms. The molecules are the smallest quantities into which any individual body or substance can be divided without losing its individuality. For instance, table-salt, or chloride of sodium, can be divided and subdivided, until you get to the limit of subdivision, which is a molecule composed of chlorine and sodium in chemical combination. Further subdivision annihilates its individuality as salt, and leaves us with the two elementary chemical atoms, chlorine and sodium, existing independently of each other. These atoms are incapable of further subdivision. In the same manner, the whole matter of the universe may be subdivided into molecules, which consist of atoms of some two or more of about sixty-seven chemical elements in various combinations. These atoms are the smallest separate particles of masses of matter, and are separated from each other by what is termed hypothetical ether—that is, the fluid ether we believe to be pervading every portion of space. Each atom possesses an inherent sum of force, or energy. The well-established and universally-admitted theory of chemical affinity teaches us that these atoms are capable of attracting and repelling each other, and, therefore, also teaches us, by implication, that they are possessed with definite inclinations, follow these sensations or impulses, and have also the will and ability to move to and from one another. This we are clearly taught by chemistry. Thus every atom in the universe possesses sensation and will, pleasure and displeasure, desire and loathing, attraction and repulsion; and its mass is, moreover, indestructible and unchangeable, and its energy eternal, as we are again taught by the theory of conservation of energy and matter. These sentient atoms of universal matter, whose aggregate energy is the great animating spirit of the universe, have the power of uniting together in various chemical combinations to form molecules, or chemical unities, developing fresh properties in the process, and forming the lowest conceivable division of compound material substances, some atoms uniting to build up crystals and other inorganic masses, and others to develop the various organic or life forms. The atoms of the ultimate molecules of both organic and inorganic bodies are identically the same. It depends entirely upon what particular combination of atoms takes place whether

an organic or inorganic form is developed. The primordial life-form we have found to be simple homogeneous plasm, consisting of molecules, each of which is composed of atoms of five elements—carbon, oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen, and sulphur, differing not one iota from the molecules of inorganic bodies, except that it acquires the special power of reproduction, by virtue of the peculiar combination of its atoms, which power is wanting in the inorganic world, whose molecules are composed of similar atoms, but in different combinations. This is the only difference between the organic, or life, world, and the inorganic, or lifeless, world—life being, as compared with unlife, but the power of reproduction. As examples of this, we may take crystals, the most perfect development of inorganic nature, and the moneron, the least perfect development of organic nature; and the difference between them is almost *nil*, certainly less than between the parents and offspring in many life-forms. The crystal molecules are composed of elementary chemical atoms, as are the moneron molecules; but the former grow by particles being deposited on particles externally, while the latter grow by particles penetrating from without, or being absorbed into the interior and becoming assimilated by the plasm, fresh molecules being evolved in the process, this special power of reproduction being generated by the peculiar combination of the atoms. This argument appears to me to be logically and scientifically sound, and disposes altogether of the notion of a break of continuity between the living and the unliving worlds, which is such a formidable difficulty to many minds. The plasm thus formed by the aggregation of life molecules gradually differentiates into protoplasm and nucleus, which together form a simple cell; and this cell partakes, by heredity, of the nature and properties of its parent form, and also, by adaptation to different circumstances surrounding its existence, acquires fresh properties, which, together with the inherited properties, it transmits to its progeny, thus evolving a still more complex form, inheriting the acquired and inherited properties of its parent, and again acquiring fresh properties; and so on, *ad infinitum*, through the various life-forms we know have been developed in the pedigree of man and animals, through *Amœbæ*, *Synamœbæ*, etc., as in the genealogy given above.

In the course of the development of different life-forms heredity—which, in plain English, is unconscious memory generated in the first life-form and transmitted through all the different species—is the sole factor in the preservation of the parent properties; while adaptation to surrounding conditions and circumstances, natural selection in the struggle for existence, and sexual selection in the struggle of the males for females are the principal factors in the differentiation of species.

HERBERT JUNIUS HARDWICKE, M.D., F.R.C.S.

SACRED BOOKS.

ALL religions have their sacred books, and we neither wonder at this nor complain of it so long as the undue exaltation of one volume does not tend to the depreciation of the rest. If anything in the world is sacred, it should be a literature lofty, noble, refined, and pure, calculated to sweeten the toils of life, to soothe its cares, to show man what he is and of what he is capable, to unfold great thoughts, to evoke sympathy in generous minds, to awaken pity for distress, to prompt to help where assistance is needed, and to discover a basis for hope in the future redemption of the race. "Give me," said Herder in the weary exhaustion of sickness, "a great thought to refresh me." And great thoughts abound in the literature of all ages and of all people who have reached any high degree of civilisation, from which sources there is no nobler occupation than to gather them for every-day use.

"'Tis not high power that makes a place divine,
Nor that the men from gods derive their line ;
But sacred thoughts in holy bosoms stored
Make people noble and the place adored."

The genius that can produce a great literature is the grandest thing that earth possesses, inasmuch as it lifts men out of themselves into a nobler region, where the air is always calm, the day serene, and the sky clear and cloudless. It teaches us a new method of looking upon the world and life. He who does not revel in great books knows little of the real enjoyment to be obtained, and must wander on in darkness, loneliness, and distress of heart.

It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that among several peoples some literature has been called divine, and that sacred books abound in many lands. But that which is surprising is the character of the books thus honoured and exalted, and the foundation upon which the superstructure of sacredness has been raised. From a Secular standpoint, the term sacred should not be applied to anything except it can be claimed on the ground of superiority or unusual excellence. Homer, Hesiod, Plato, Aristotle, Horace, and Virgil, with many other thinkers and men of genius in later days, tower like mighty columns above the rest of the race, and have handed down to us great thoughts which can never die. The literature they have left us is the really sacred

literature, and their books are the truly divine productions of man. The kingdom in which they bear sway is not of heaven, but of earth; not of God, but of man. Humanity thus takes the place so long usurped by divinity, and genius, instead of theology, becomes the guide of life, the foundation of hope, and the inspirer of love.

It is not intended to discuss here the merits or demerits of the books called sacred. Let them be as sublime and as superior to the rest of the world's literature as they are claimed to be; we only demand that they shall be viewed from a human standpoint, judged by human faculties, tested by human reason, and prized according to their real value to mankind at large. It is the spurious claims put forth on their behalf to which we object and against which we protest. They are called supernatural productions, which takes them out of the category of literature in general, places them on a pinnacle out of the reach of criticism, and imparts to them an artificial, not to say a fictitious, value, in no sort of sense dependent upon the teaching they embody, the principles they inculcate, or the genius displayed in their composition. The Christian proclaims the Bible to be the word of God, and asks us to believe in its divine authority, based upon its supernatural origin. Precisely the same claim is made by the Mohammedan for his Koran, by the Parsee for his Zendavesta, and by the Hindoo for his Vedas and Shaster, to say nothing of the followers of Joseph Smith and their alleged supernaturally-discovered book of Mormon. A discussion of the claims of each of these we may well leave to their respective advocates, and when either of them makes an appeal to us we may very legitimately request them to settle the differences among themselves before calling upon us to enlist under their banner, and thus give up the only method by which we think we are capable of judging of the value of any work that may fall in our way.

Now, so far from denying the sacredness of any particular book, we rather extend that description to all; only it is necessary that the sense in which we use the word should be kept in mind. The so-called supernatural, of course, we do not admit, because to do so would be a suicidal policy, rendering it impossible for us, with natural faculties only, to test what is thus brought before us. We require to keep within the bounds of nature, and those are really wide enough for any man, however high his ambition or however lofty his aim. All literature must be judged by its intrinsic value, and the reason of man is the only touchstone that can prove of the least use in criticism, whatever book is concerned.

With us, therefore, sacred literature does not consist of supernaturally-inspired books, the work of god or angels, but of the productions of the masterminds of all ages whose genius may have shed a light

on human things, and whose rich thoughts must ever live and germinate as long as the race of men endures. This kind of sacredness originates with man, belongs to man, and ends with man. It accompanies him through life, and does not desert him at the hour of death. It cheers him in trouble, supports him in the hour of weakness, consoles him in distress, comforts him in affliction, and brings sunshine with every phase of life.

If it be said, in answer to all this, that some one of the so-called sacred books of the world can stand the test which has here been laid down; that, tried by this method, it will prove itself superior to every other book, and that its intrinsic excellence is greater than that of all other volumes, we reply: Let that be done, and to us it becomes at once one of the really sacred books. It need hardly be said that such is not the method usually adopted by those who believe in the supernatural, their object being not to show the superiority of their supposed revelation by anything that it contains, but to plead for its divine authority, which they defend on very different grounds. However, our only desire is to judge of all books in the same way—namely, by the excellence of their teaching, the purity of the principles set forth, the lofty tone of the morality inculcated, the sublimity of the genius displayed, and the adaptation of the whole to the wants of the human race.

CHARLES WATTS.

SCIENCE AND POETRY.

SCIENCE is knowledge of the universe as it is. It is the actual, the definite, the classified. It allows no imagination. It is simply matter-of-fact. At first glance, it seems entirely opposed to poetry; for the province of poetry is to transcend fact, to pierce, if possible, to that which underlies this fact; and this cannot be done by experiment, only by imagination. Poetry dwells in beauty, in wonder, in romance. It revels in perfection; it abhors discord; it will not analyse; it seeks unity. Science discusses; poetry blends. Science accepts all things; poetry discards the ugly and retains the beautiful. Science is universal; poetry is partial: it selects, it discriminates, it chooses. The life of science is reality; the life of poetry is the "stuff that dreams are made of."

In a sense, there is antagonism between science and poetry. They

have different ends in view : the one is truth, the other beauty ; the one is law, the other is art ; the one conforms, the other creates ; the one is wise acceptance, the other is "divine discontent." But this real antagonism, like discord in music, ends, at last, in a profound adaptation. For its highest achievements poetry demands science ; and science, in its sublimest conquests, must be animated by the spirit of the dreamer. Science must transcend fact, in order to attain the greater fact. In his daring experiments the seeker after truth must have the "inspired madness." He must surpass what is in order to translate into living presence what may be. The poet, in going beyond fact, must start from fact. He cannot dwell in imagination only. If he does, his words are meaningless and his music vain. All great poetry is profoundly matter-of-fact. It is not subjective, but objective. It draws its images from the outward universe, and not merely from mental processes. This firm earth is evermore the temple whence its sweetest melody flows.

Science does not make poetry ; the source of poetry is the spirit of mankind, led by the immeasurable life of all. Science is the instrument of poetry ; it gives a thousand avenues whereby the exultant spirit of man may advance. How beautiful is science ! Though it accepts the lowly with the same reverence that it accepts the high, yet how triumphantly it transforms the base into the refined and the exquisite ! What a sense of power it gives by conformity to law ! It submits and so reigns, and touches the highest heights of being ; and the fire of its crucible becomes the touch of eternal progress. Beauty is truth, and something more, as Goethe says ; but it is truth first of all, and nothing can be beautiful unless it is true. So the poet must be in accordance with nature. He must interpret it rightly ; he must know the facts of the case, or he cannot see and expose its genuine romance.

Poetry and science are thus essential aids to each, and together make the art of life a perpetual joy and progress. They separate but to unite. By different aims they make more vast the common goal of Humanity. To be a poet is to be pre-eminently a truthseeker ; to be a truthseeker is to be pre-eminently a dreamer, a fore-seer, not of fancies, but of the infinite reality. The poet cannot neglect the rudest stone at his feet ; the man of science, from fact to fact, takes in the orbits of a million stars. The farthest imagination roots itself in the life of to-day, and the life of to-day thrills with all the "wonder that will be."

SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.

AGNOSTICISM AND A FUTURE LIFE.

FIRST PAPER.

IN determining the nature and origin of customs and beliefs, much assistance is derived from an acquaintance with the divers forms under which they appear, the changes through which they have passed, and the phenomena amid which they were born. If this historical and comparative method be applied to the elucidation of religious beliefs, it will become apparent that man neither has, nor has had, knowledge of anything outside natural phenomena, and that his ideas of the so-called supernatural are due to that conservatism of custom and tradition which clings to the shadow when the substance is no more. The claim of revelation to give evidence of the supernatural fades away before the fact that its fundamental dogmas are not novel, but common to nations and tribes throughout the world.

In the "Agnostic Annual for 1884" I pointed out that the tendency of religious, as well as of scientific, evolution is towards agnosticism in regard to the supernatural; and, in the present paper, I purpose further to illustrate the argument by a consideration of the ideas of a future life.

In the light shed upon this subject by the anthropological researches of the past quarter of a century there can be little doubt that these beliefs owe their genesis to those misconceptions of phenomena which are the logical outcome of primitive and inexperienced minds; and the law that "like conditions produce like results" receives a striking illustration in the universal similarity of their fundamental features. Moreover, that such beliefs are more natural to the savage and ignorant than to the civilised and educated mind is evidenced by the fact that, the farther we go back in history, the more real and vital become those beliefs, until we reach a stage in which individuals readily sacrifice themselves to accompany the deceased or to act as messengers from the living to the dead.

The conception of a "self" separable from the body comes to the primitive mind both readily and easily. When the savage dreams that he has wandered in his sleep—has visited things and places, or that others have visited him, he can explain the phenomena in no other way than by the supposition of their reality. He

knows, as a matter of common observation, that the bodies of dreamers remain where they laid, and he concludes, therefore, that he can, and sometimes does, leave his body. This belief in the reality of dreams has been universal among nations, and dreams and visions, natural or induced, have played no small part in the history of religion. The conclusion receives apparent confirmation from the various forms of unconsciousness during which the patient appears to have left his body and afterwards to have returned. Such beliefs have lasted a long way into history; and in the Middle Ages, if a person accused of having attended the witches' Sabbath proved that she was in bed at the time, the evidence was set aside as futile, on the ground that the phenomena of catalepsy showed that the spirit was able to leave the body and afterwards to return to it.

If the belief in a "self" separable from the body is a natural inference of the uncivilised mind, with equal readiness is suggested the explanation of what that "self" consists. Among the speculation upon this subject two phenomena stand out pre-eminently as having been universally adopted—the shadow and the breath. The apparent separability and independence of the shadow, its resemblance to the form, and its unsubstantial nature, offer a plausible solution of the forms and things seen in dreams. This is well shown in the dialogue between Odysseus and his mother in "Hades." "I wished," said Odysseus, "to take hold of my mother's spirit. Thrice my thoughts urged me to embrace her; but thrice from my arms, like a shadow or even a dream, she flew away." Disappointed, he cried in his grief, "Has Persephone deluded me with a shadow, that I might grieve the more?" To which his mother replied that "it is but the state of mortals when they are dead. They have no more flesh, nor bones, nor sinews." Readers of Dante's "Divine Comedy" will remember how Dante was recognised as one of the living by his shadow on the ground. The Egyptians believed the shadow to be a distinct portion of the personality, which was restored to the deceased after death. The New England tribes call the soul *chemung*, the shadow; in Quiché *natub*, and in Eskimo *tarnak*, express both these ideas. The Algonkin Indians describe a man's soul as *otahchuk*, his shadow; and the Arawac *ueja* means "shadow, soul, image." The Zulus believe that the dead cast no shadow; while a Basuto is careful of walking alongside a river, lest a crocodile should seize his shadow and draw him in.

Equally world-wide is the intimacy between the soul and the breath. As Dr. Tylor remarks, "the act of breathing, so characteristic of the higher animals during life, and coinciding so closely with life in its departure, has been repeatedly identified with the life or soul itself." Abundant testimony to this may be adduced both from philology

and customs. The Sanskrit *âtman*, the "soul-self," is from a root meaning to breathe; the Latin *anima*, "the soul," is related to the Greek *anemos*, wind. Our word "spirit" is connected with the Latin *spirare*, "to breathe;" ghost is related to the German *geist*. So the Hebrew *nephesh*, breath, has taken the meanings of "life, soul, mind, animal;" while *ruach* and *neshamah* make a similar transition from breath to spirit.

Among the natives of Nicaragua and California, in Java and in West Australia, the soul is described as the air or breeze which passes in and out through the nostrils and mouth. Among the Seminoles of Florida, when a woman dies in childbirth, the child is held over her mouth to receive her parting spirit, and thus acquire strength and knowledge for its future use. At the deathbed of an ancient Roman the nearest kinsman lent over to inhale the last breath of the departing. So, in Lancashire, when a witch died, some years since, wishing to transfer her familiar spirit to some trusty successor, she sent for a neighbour, of whom it was confidently affirmed she had inhaled the witch's last breath.

In its nature, the "spirit" or "ghost" of early man possessed all the attributes which the foregoing would lead us to infer. What Mr. Bancroft writes of the American natives is equally applicable universally: "The most general idea of the soul seems to have been that of a double self, possessing all the essence and attributes of the individual, except the carnal embodiment, and independent of the body, in so far as it was able to leave it and revel in other scenes and spheres. It would accordingly, appear to another person, by day or night, as a phantom, and leave the remembrance of its visits in ideas, remembrances, and dreams." Possessing the requirements of the individual, it needed food, wives, and attendants, weapons and tools, to be sacrificed for its use. In substance it was of an ethereal materiality; and, while it possessed the power of flitting anywhere at will, like shadows and the stuff dreams are made of, it was intangible to the human touch.

W. SADLER.

A.D. 2500.

ANTIPODEAN AGNOSTICISM: ITS WHENCE AND ITS WHITHER.

CHAPTER III.—A THEORY OF HISTORY—AND PRACTICE.

It is not very evident why we should, any of us, trouble ourselves to write history, much less to read it. The great authority of Mr. Burke tells us history is not to be looked upon as a book of precedents. But, on the other hand, symmetry obliges us to refuse to accept it as a sheet let down from the heaven of antiquity, full of unclean animals, grunting Jeremiads. These, however, are questions which deal with the application of true history, supposing we have it. But what have we?

Historical perspective, rightly considered, is the difference between things as they are and things as they appear to us. It is the enchantment, the glamour which distance lends, and which the wise man, if he knew how, would certainly exorcise. It is a negative quantity which not unfrequently brings out a ludicrous answer. Could we but do away with the childish business, we should then see face to face; we should perhaps know, even as we are known, by the irreverential valets who surround us. It does not seem to us that matters are much improved by those who assert that they have actually raised themselves out of the mundane mists and methods. I am acquainted with a member of the Balloon Society who is never happy but when he is breathing the very refined atmosphere which no mere climber could attain even at the elevation of Mont Blanc. Awed by his conquest of vast space, interested in the insignificant positions which he is able to assign offhand to little garden plots, which I have been in the habit of regarding as epochs and continents, I was preparing to give him my adhesion when he staggered me by asserting that the true shape of the world was that of a basin; that he in his balloon was the true peak of a spiritual cone, endowed with the stablest of equilibria. I needed to smoke a pipe with a kindhearted professor of physics to be soothed back into my old school concept of the world as an oblate spheroid; and, though there are times when I still incline to strike a balance between their assertions, and to agree with antique geographers and paradoxical wagers that the world is not so much orange as pancake, I am, on the whole, generally and honestly able to give my lay support to my friend the physicist, who has a pretty distinct explanation to give why Moab and the rest of the world

should look like a wash-pot, while the other seems rather to toss on one side than to taste the orange. Parallax's notion is that the balloonist, like the rest of us, though more unconsciously, is at the mercy of perspective—that we should look at things from every possible point of view, not excluding the Cloudland Observatory ; and he assures me that, though there are times when, like the rest of us, he feels, intellectually speaking, a miserable sinner, and even has doubts whether Archimedes and Euclid were altogether right in some of their axioms, still that, on the whole, he is at peace with himself ; and annually, from the safe security of Consolidated happiness, draws the 3 per cent., which is as much interest as any prudent man should now-a-days expect. Parallax can even calmly contemplate a reduction to $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

These considerations have reconciled me to the existence of perspective, which, like the poor, and, I hope, like the Charity Organisation Society, we are always to have with us ; and it has in some degree given me confidence in my own historical instincts. I shall ever endeavour rather to bask in the sunshine than to bemoan the shadow ; and dimly surmising that not only men and women, but even the rest of the animal kingdom, must suffer from the inherent defects—that is, the necessary conditions—of vision, I conclude that it would be foolish indeed to quarrel with the constitution of the universe. Though I allow myself to be taken, by pessimist and even Satanic agencies, from high place to high place, I will continue serenely to hope that, even to the very last, I shall be able to bless and not curse Israel.

In such a spirit I have been able to look back upon Antipodean history. Let no man take my words for Gospel, for the imperfections above alluded to come out even in the modern popular method of writing history in bulky crown octavos, where the speaking of a lifetime is cut down to an epigram contained in a single line of old style bourgeois. On the most moderate of computations, the "tale that is told" by the average of men must be represented by ten or eleven million lines of bourgeois type ; and a sieve that had a conscience might spend at least nine life-times in straining out just the one most characteristic saying. If he boggled long about the task, he would probably attack fresh principles, and question whether there really was any one characteristic saying, and whether all were not equally characteristic. From this metaphysics of history he might be recalled to the *Alma mater* of all abstractions, the concrete earth, by a vision of the great Luther, prophet of a living not a stagnant deity, an onward and not a retrograde power, a flood advancing and not a monopolised backwater ; and our would-be historian, his muscles utterly relaxed by intense emotion, might not improbably fall back into his easy chair, or, with elbows on writing-table supporting a weary head, lean forwards, or in some other attitude

of helplessness and dependency appropriate to an age of furniture humbly and even tearfully murmur : " Here scribble I—I can no other—God helping me. Amen."

After this outburst he would cold-bloodedly resume his pen and knock off the Antipodean ecclesiastical history of some thousands of years, *plus* moralisings, in an allotted space of something less than fifty pages. Having the advantage of little material to go upon, and absolutely no rivals to plagiarise (the State papers and Antipodean Museum having been destroyed in the Great Australian Revolution), he would trust rather to a few bold strokes than to condensed detail. The reader stands credited with sufficient abilities to fill in the shading.

We have got to the point where Squatterson and his aristocratic spouse had taken possession of the Presidential quarters at Sydney. The match had every appearance of being a happy one. The husband was rich, he had work which he liked, and the lady was not merely beautiful, but bright, clever, and social. They compensated for one another's defects and angularities in a way that would have been impossible had they not, during the courtship, made a conjoint study of the Laureate's Princess, the *finale* of which seemed to be the rails of which their express had already proved the sureness and the smoothness. Did she make fun of the Aborigines, as she laughingly designated the President's subjects or constituents? Did she even dare to call the President the "Grand Old Aboriginal"? What matter, when the incipient frown could be smoothed off her husband's forehead with the ready Apologia for woman,

" Could we make her as the man,
Sweet love were slain, whose dearest bond is this,
Not like to like, but like in difference."

And when Squatterson had his big quarrel with the Bishop over the Emulcent, and, coming back jaded from the Treasury, would sometimes find his wife pouring out tea, not "husband's tea," but the most fragrant infusion procurable in the Colony, and telling the "dear Bishop" the way in which she would manage all his refractory clergy, arrange positions, and contradict Privy Councils, how soon was the aggravation toned down with the faint appeal :—

" I shall die to night :
Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I die."

Could it but have continued ! But there was an unreality, as of enchantment, about her every action. She was one of those ethereal essences which are all over the room before you have well uncorked the bottle ; she was irrestrainable, while still you could not discern a pattern in the whole mosaic of her life. She lived in the present like a butterfly, and

the distance of one flower to another was her life-unit of measurement. With precedents for fibbing her ancestral cousin Elizabeth supplied her in as many colours as the rainbow itself; and so convenient was the royal example that she utterly refused to listen to Burke. You might have thought her a reader of Professor Blackie, who assures us, in his pleasant little work on "Self-Culture," not to trouble ourselves too much about consistency.

But you could not but have been charmed with the archness with which she once appealed to the Bishop on the subject of her husband's defects. She had begun to find out that this husband was granite, from the surface of which ether is certain to evaporate without producing any appreciable chemical action.

"Bishop, dear: what am I to do with Squatterson?"

We will notice, in passing, that Lady Boadicea would not have behaved thus to a bishop in England. She would there have entertained and cherished De Quincey's opinion about them, that they are *parvenus*; but the sky does affect manners, after all; and in Australia there was about his Lordship a pleasant flavour of courtliness and old times.

"Yes," she continued, "and I gave a dinner the other day, because I wanted Lady Jane Grey and the Educational Commissioner to knock their heads together. Jane is always at her best when she has the Great Aboriginal to tease; and, would you believe it, he never came home for dinner at all!"

"Dear me," said the Bishop; "dear me—you don't say so?"

Now, the Bishop was capable of an answer containing much more emotional leverage in the direction of tears of laughter, or smiles of tenderness, than "Dear me." He was a bishop who played many parts—a sort of Bab-ballad bishop; a bishop of infinite jest, like Yorick; a bishop whose mingled witticism and sententiousness across the walnuts and the wine had guided the Church through shoals in the easy way in which a man, by moving the small handle of a hydraulic engine, may steer the Admiral's ship, and thus the Channel Squadron, and, that being so large a factor in the balance of power, the whole course of civilisation itself. But it didn't seem the time for witticisms just then. The Bohea had not had time to operate, or perhaps he and the Dean had been talking seriously to one another, as we know deans and bishops do; or the Bishop was conning an omitted repartee, or was glad to be let alone.

"Dear me!" repeated the Bishop, musingly and meaninglessly.

"Dear me!" poutingly mimicked the Lady Boadicea. "Is that all? Why, I thought you would have excommunicated him, at the least. Here have I come in a horrible P.O. boat from dear old England, and he won't leave his cave to eat his dinner like a Christian!"

Cold soup isn't Christian, is it, Father? It makes him cross, so it can't be."

"Well, my daughter, we ought to bear and for—"

"Oh, Bishop darling, don't preach; I can't stand it. Oh, what fun! We'll have an impromptu service in the servant's hall, and you shall talk to them in the tongue understood of the Aborigines. Perhaps it would help my cook to get up early."

As she clapped her hands in childish glee, and then gazed at him perplexedly, or in mock perplexity, with her lustrous eyes, she added, "Do you like the Aborigines?"

If the truth must be told (and, sooner or later, the truth in this world *does* get itself told, and, to my thinking, better sooner than later), the Bishop was *not* very fond of the Aborigines. He might be said to be in the Antipodes, yet not of the Antipodes. Perhaps, if he could have made the necessary effort, and begun by drinking Australian wines, things would have been different (I drink it myself, when I can get it); but the Bishop had his port in octaves from Lisbon, and this fact, among others, caused his patriotism to be suspected—a fault too grave for any witticism to cure; a soreness which the Emulcent itself might not completely overlay. Long afterwards, when the Infinity which surrounds us came to be worshipped in departments—when the bright but otherwise uninteresting focus-light of Agnosticism had passed into the spectrum of Polytheism, a gifted young painter made a vast reputation by presenting to the altar of the chapel of the god of Suspicion a propitiatory historical study. There sat our bishop, in a stately, solid, almost mediæval throne of mahogany; there, too, from a low, dainty, velvety, and belaced ottoman, leant forward the Lady Boadicea, pleadingly resting the filbert tips of the Strawberry fingers on the white, wrinkled, jewelled, and rather large hand of the ecclesiastic, which lay on the official apron which covered the episcopal knee. As she gazes upwards playfully, perplexedly—none can tell which—into the Bishop's face, and repeats, "You *don't* love the Aborigines, do you?" there is seen to enter behind, on the left, Squatterson himself, a President who, at the date of the picture, had long enjoyed the reputation of a Charlemagne for having, finally and successfully, closed the gates of the Federation against the distracting incursions of civilised hordes. Silently he stands in the background, his person and his soul alike bathed in shadow, the artist having skilfully seized the exact moment when the hot steel of the Presidential wrath was tempering itself, hissing and reluctantly, in the oil of diplomacy, for a more enduring contest than any of which rugged and primitive iron is capable.

W. GREATHEED.

(*To be continued.*)

NOTES AND SCRAPS.

It is proposed to raise a fund having for its object the publishing and distribution of literature expository of Agnosticism. One gentleman promises to subscribe £5 to such fund. We shall be pleased to hear from those who are favourable to the suggestion. The expenditure of a few hundred pounds in the promulgation of our views would, we are confident, be attended with the most encouraging results. The matter, however, rests mainly with our more wealthy friends. What do they say?

From the letters published in "George Eliot's Life" it is evident that the author of "Adam Bede" had little sympathy with militant Freethought. Of a quiet, unobtrusive disposition herself, she resented the violent and vulgar declamation which, unfortunately, too often characterises the more aggressive propagandists of the liberal movement. Her sympathies were avowedly with the cultured Agnosticism of Mr. Herbert Spencer, whom she frequently speaks of as her dear and valued friend. To accuse George Eliot of sophistry, as some of her critics have done, is certainly ungracious, and hardly warranted by her published declarations; but there may be ground for imputing to the accomplished novelist the possession of an over-sensitive and somewhat timorous disposition. In our next issue we shall publish a special review of Mr. Cross's volumes, from the pen of F. Sydney Morris.

It is not yet decided who shall succeed Mr. Conway at South Place Chapel, Finsbury. We understand that a large majority of the congregation are favourable to the appointment of Dr. Andrew Wilson; but the talented editor of *Health* insists on unanimity among the members of the Society before he will accept of the office. In the meantime candidates for the ministerial post are delivering addresses at South Place Chapel, one of the recent speakers being Mr. F. Sydney Morris, who created a most favourable impression. We had not the pleasure of hearing our esteemed contributor; but, from reports that have reached us, we gather that the minister of St. Mary's, York, besides being an earnest and cultured advocate of Agnosticism, is also an eloquent and forcible speaker. Next to Dr. Wilson, there could not be a more worthy successor to Mr. Conway than Mr. F. Sydney Morris, who appears to have all the qualifications of a successful and popular public teacher.

The religion which proclaims a Heavenly Father, a Divine Elder Brother, a spiritual Comforter, as in their own essence, and in the faith

reposed in them, sufficient solacement for all the sorrows of mankind, errs transparently. There are woes and pangs which no development, even the highest, of the paternal, fraternal, or sympathetic relationships could in the least assuage—times when all personified attention and affection is utterly powerless, if not distasteful. And no deification of earthly relationship can change the nature of the relationship, or make it other than it is, even by production to infinity. From the love and compassion of father, brother, and friend we all, at times, will turn away in the tempest of our grief, unconsolated and inconsolable. Any sanative virtue of this type loses power upon us also as we grow older. An *adult*, as distinguished from a *childish*, religion makes its ultimate appeal, not to any spiritual relative or friend—still less to a pitiless natural universe, wholly inert or moribund—but to something, somewhat, undefinable, since to know is but to despise ; to that which *not* to know is life eternal.

“The soul of goodness in things evil” may be often curiously traced. In the doctrine of “the perseverance of the saints”—that strange theological imagining which follows the career of the once-for-all “elected” spirit through the mists of sin and the depths of vileness to its sure goal of blessedness hereafter—may there not be traced some shadowy hint of the truth that all things base are redeemed by the undying spirituality latent therein ; that the crust of earth is but a vesture, veiling an unpolluted spirit ; that nothing in itself is vile, but all divine, save that abhorrent belief that all things are material, and that there is no divine ?

Unlike some others, we find no comfort in despair. Could we choose, we had rather be lifted ultimately from the dust of death to some glad, new morning on the “hills of God” than lie beside the worm, and be dispersed among the viewless winds. But the choice is not ours to make, and we are content. Only we do not glory in the fact of that deep abasement which shall befall us. With our consent, the word “Resurgam” shall not be placed above our grave. But this we know, that, were all faiths vain, the hollow mockery of a dream, we could yet wish, at the instant of death—in the damps and terrors of that supreme moment when the heart-strings break—none other sound to linger in our dying ear than the susurrations of a mother’s prayer.

It is a safe rule never to enter into any controversy in the subject-matter and history of which you are not thoroughly versed. Others will see, even though they may not take advantage of, the joints in your dialectic harness. The other day, in a well-known Unitarian weekly newspaper, a Trinitarian correspondent sharply called the editor to account for his views on the Unity, and clinched his own argument against the latter “from the Bible” with—the text of the “Three Heavenly Witnesses !”

For the first time, the birthday of Charles Darwin has just been

celebrated in England, Birmingham being the town which can lay claim to the distinction of inaugurating what may become an annual festival. Our contributor, Charles C. Cattell, in a powerful and appreciative speech, proposed the toast, "The Immortal Memory of Charles Darwin," which was responded to by a local *littérateur*. We understand that it was decided to repeat the ceremony next year on a more extended scale.

We remember an old-fashioned, strongly-Protestant periodical of our young days called the *Bulwark*. The Roman Catholic fared badly at the editor's hands in the letter-press. Even the illustrations of this serial were malignant—so much so that our sense of fair-play revolted. In the same way, certain "anti-Infidel" publications are so grossly unjust to their adversaries as often to enlist our sympathy in favour of the latter; only—and this restrains us—many of the so-called "Infidel" prints are equally unfair in the treatment of their orthodox foes.

In any literary dispute requiring scholarship for its decision it is well to consult only the highest authorities—preferably those who have made the point in question their special study. To rest satisfied with an opinion of inferior weight, when better might be had for the asking, betrays, in the inquirer, a prejudiced mind. He is content, it may be, to have his own preconceived theory confirmed, and fears an appeal to a higher court, where the decision might possibly be reversed.

"D.C.L." writes highly eulogising "C. N.'s" poem in our last issue, and expresses a hope that "the talented writer will frequently grace the pages of your invaluable magazine." Numerous commendatory letters have reached us concerning "Julian's" papers, one correspondent declaring that, "for scholarship and research, they are absolutely unequalled."

Dr. Hardwicke has just published a lecture delivered at the Albert Hall, Sheffield, entitled "The Creation and Fall." It is a vigorous and eloquent criticism of these long-since-exploded orthodox doctrines, and we have pleasure in recommending the pamphlet for wide distribution.

A generous friend has instructed our publishers to post 250 copies of the *Agnostic* to probable subscribers. We heartily thank our practical well-wisher, and commend his example to other wealthy supporters. Messrs. H. Cattell & Co. will be pleased to forward fifty copies of the magazine for distribution on receipt of £1.

The Agnostic:

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF LIBERAL THOUGHT.

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"Agnosticism simply means that a man shall not say he knows or believes that which he has no scientific grounds for professing to know or believe.....Agnosticism says that we know nothing of what may be beyond phenomena."—PROF. HUXLEY.

"I think that generally (and more and more as I grow older), but not always, an Agnostic would be the more correct description of my state of mind."—CHARLES DARWIN.

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APRIL, 1885.

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THE AGNOSTIC.

APRIL, 1885.

THE CONFESSION OF AGNOSTICISM.

FAITH AND MANNERS.

THE careless critic—surely the gayest-hearted of all the children of men—is accustomed to approach Agnosticism with the foregone conclusion that he will find no fruit thereon. Our theological friends are somewhat graver in their denunciation of our “barren and profitless speculations” as leading to nothing in the way of results. In the matter of “works” we are generally viewed as being in an exceedingly bad way. The wonder is that we are not conscious of it, and stricken of heart accordingly. We are, indeed, to be considered as utterly useless and unprofitable, were it not that we continued to afford to outsiders, by way of lesson, that painful example of leaves without figs. It is not surprising that we are thus estimated. Those in whose confession of faith and profession of works there is an unknown quantity naturally show at a considerable disadvantage beside those who are fully persuaded that they “know what they worship.” So ingrained in the human mind is the idea that spiritual assets are precisely on a par with those material that the majority of persons take stock of their possessions in both kinds, precisely in the same way and at the same time, and any item of either not immediately realisable (not “there,” in the cant phrase) is apt to be scouted forthwith.

Given a known and an unknowable object of religious worship, or contemplation, respectively, and everything viewed as flowing therefrom will be coloured by that professed knowledge or by that confessed ignorance. That is the contention of our reviewers, and it is substantially our own; only the critic adds, what we do not grant, that, whereas moral or religious results flowing from the worship of the known will always be tangible, results flowing from mere empty speculation will be

barren as their source. As from nothing nothing comes, so from that Unknowable, to which no moral virtue can possibly be attributed, no incentive to morality can possibly proceed. There are two errors here. The Unknowable cannot be described as "nothing;" that distinction is reserved, proverbially, for "idols." And from any object of worship, or, if you will, of contemplation, known or unknown, we deny that, in any wise, the faintest trace of moral authority can take its origin. A Deity may be deftly conjoined with moral virtues, intimately bound up with their practice, and viewed as inseparable from their observance; but share in the production, in the beginning of virtue, no Deity ever had. And this necessarily. For no morality or virtue is distinguishable as such, or definable as virtue; save as the definition rises alongside that which is non-virtuous, immoral. There is no sinless or wholly moral Paradise conceivable, as such, unless you start from the idea of sin in the first place, less which postulated *sinlessness* begins. So that, speak of an All Pure as you will, that purity must begin and take its rise in contrast with impurity, from which, granted, it is a righteous revolt or recoil. Unless you make sin co-eternal with Holiness (when Holiness would be limited), that Holiness could never exist or reveal itself *as* Holiness in any way conceivable. Sever, however, right and wrong, goodness and evil, from any eternal fount whatsoever; make these distinctions and these qualities wholly human; paint the conception of that which is adored or contemplated in a neutral tint, ascribing neither absolute purity nor the reverse to that which has no concern with such ideas, and you reduce the problem to definite limits: the sole subjects of morality will be those with parts and passions, and not that which is without gush. Absolute purity, love, benevolence, would simply mean a vacuity, a perpetual smile, empty as that of imbecility.

Has, then, our moral conduct, our life rule, anything to do with that which we regard as wholly unknowable? Being as it is unknowable, we cannot tell: we are forbidden, by the limits of our knowledge, to ascribe any influences, any qualities whatsoever, to the Unknowable. And though we cannot deny that any moral influence is exercised therefrom, we as certainly cannot affirm it. Our morality must, then, so far as we are concerned, and in the matter of our life, begin and end outside of our conviction in regard to the Unknowable. For the pattern of virtue and for its sanctions we look in vain to the darkness. Only in the light are these revealed. Traced to its source, we find a root for social virtues in purely human relationships, in communal bonds, and collective interests. Our code of morals is, therefore, wholly secularist in application.

Once we make this admission, a far-reaching, and indeed infinite, consequence is revealed. Rising within our sight, a segment of the

arch of morality appears; but not the full circle, or even the perfect bow. Part is hidden. We are forbidden, by our first principles, to affirm that anything we know is wholly secular; so that that which begins within our sight, which we cannot conceive as separate from us, has thus, and nevertheless, far-reaching issues added to it which we cannot divine. Nothing can be ours wholly, either to experience or to know; nothing wholly material, ponderable, or measurable. The practical side of morals, like the practical side of nature, we profess to know and to lean upon; the mystical side of morals, like the mystical part of all besides, dips into shade. Apart from ourselves and our surroundings, no virtue is so much as conceivable by us; but, at the instant of its birth, with us it becomes more than human, hints of something beyond, for which we have no words. Materialism in the moral is no less hateful than Materialism in the physical world. Morality is part of ourselves, and not otherwise is it conceivable by us; but in that junction it becomes two-fold, as are we ourselves.

Dimly, indistinctly, visible has ever been, in the religious history of the past, that "other side of duty"—stimulus and reward in one. But how degenerate, how far debased, from some primitive principle sublime, the idea of obeying a command, or, on the other side, the compulsory obeyal of necessity! How completely does either condition empty the virtuous deed, the simplest duty, of all significance! The very essence of such actions is that they leap to performance, not spontaneously and yet not of compulsion, but as in obedience to an inner warrant of their own, self-explanatory and self-sufficient.

Right actions and wrong, in the moral world, have their persistent force no less than indifferent actions in the physical world. In no wise can the consequences of either be self-contained; nor can the simplest moral action be without its double fruit, without its twin result, although to us the secular, the visible side, alone is known. Blind devotion to the right, because it *is* the right (of which some make much ado), is no higher than a kind of elevated doggedness, a perseverance which may be based upon self-conceit, and be mistaken after all. But blend the performance of the simplest task with the idea that its *evident* justification is not all, perhaps only a fractional part of its claim upon us, yet that this claim, in its highest sense, is not pressed, but only added as an eternal fitness, with which we have *not* to do, and you raise the performance of duty higher than the heavens, far above the level of obedience to a mandate, and above all forced compliance with an imperious necessity.

The ageless question, Does merit or demerit attach to an act of self-determination on the one hand, or of determined-self on the other? has some light cast upon it from this position. Whether rigid necessity

or the simple casualism of freewill exists as the directing power over our actions, each alike is only existent, conceivably, as contemporary with ourselves. We cannot think of determination existing when there is nothing to be determined; no directing power is conceivable, as director, when there are no puppets to be influenced. And there can be no choice, however free and uncontrolled, without a chooser. Once, then, that the presence of freewill or of necessity is, for the first time, evident (viz., in connection with spontaneous or necessitated actions), from that moment (which, to us, is the beginning) the problem divides itself in twain. The solution is two-fold. A single answer involves endless contradictions; but when we recognise that, say, to a virtuous action (judged according to our secular standard of morality) there is due, at once, merit and no merit—the first in so far as the act is known, the second in so far as the consequences of the act, its production infinitely, transcend our knowledge—the seeming contradiction is reconciled. Obedience to a recognised beneficial order or system is praiseworthy, or, at least, unblamable; but what can we say of compliance (if compliance it be) with an unknown law? Our wills are ours, within the limits of knowledge; not ours, without that boundary. Our secular code sufficeth for our guidance; there is another law, containing unspeakable words, an unwritten commandment—nay, an obligation; but it conflicts not with our doings, even as our metaphysics conflicts not with our life.

Duty seeks to be grounded deep, and we plant its roots in an unknowable depth, though limiting its obligations to ourselves alone. When duty is solely material, the adjunct of a material belief, it becomes merely a passionate love of order, a sense of fitness, an ethical deportment, shallow and weak. It is in the domain of morals that the pitiful feebleness of a life-faith wholly material reveals itself. It has neither adequate motive for sublime duty, nor comfort for us when we fall short in performance. Christianity had both. There are exquisite conceptions in that faith in this connection; the custom, however, of the popular religionism is to miss their finding, or to blur the outlines when found. It was a noble thought to image the burden of earth's sorrows and sins as too heavy to be borne, until One, who came from the Unknown and returned thither again, lightened, by his own bearing, that grievous load and carried it hence. It is ever from the unknown mystery that solace comes to us when the burden of the actual is too heavy for us. For in the actual, in the seen and felt *itself*, there is no comfort and no help, nor ever shall be. Men have gone restlessly with their sorrows to the hills and to the sea, and there have wept and prayed, as if the scene could succour them, or some invisible spirit, only abiding by rock or shore. But they have returned thence un comforted :

the day of local Deities is past ; a more abject persuasion than that of their existence has taken their place, for some would have it that there is no room to be found, on sea or endless shore, for the abode of any spiritual. Errors both ; for the whole earth, as we believe it, is filled with an infinite presence, and there is no place to be found for aught that is not divine.

These halting words near their close. Is there anything yet to be added ? Some persons seek for "comfort" in their religion, viewing it mainly as an anodyne in the rush and stress of many-voiced life. Is there any Peace ? There *is*, and there *is not*, must be our reply. A brilliant, rather than a profound, seer in these latter days has told us that the immediate sequel of his revelation is that "all loneliness is done, and all despairs must vanish." We trow not ; not, at least, for that "little while" which, petty fragment though it be of long eternity, is yet equivalent to an eternity for us. Loneliness and despair will touch us all even until we sleep. But we are not without comfort or without hope, seeing that our expectation and our desire are founded, not upon the after-results of evolutionary development—results which, however apparently close at hand, may yet be delusive, may come nearly "full-circle" in our sight, and then recede, leaving ages of the dark once more—but upon that conviction which cannot be shaken, because it can neither be certainly affirmed nor denied, and yet remains. It is well. A dazzling universe, suffused with the unbroken sunshine of joy, were, after all, from joy's excess, a weary place. An existence endless and unshadowed with any cloud of pain is but a silly dream of those who would be at ease. Better our work on plain or hill-side, fanned by the zephyr, braced by the rude storm, and chequered with the sunshine and the cloud. Amid the conditions of a painless, nerveless existence all virtue, all excellence, would be blanched, as a plant, by too much sunlight. Amid perfect knowledge, all soul-faculty would wither for lack of appetite. Our comfort is that comfort must ever be needed, and that it will surely come to the heart that is not afraid and that is at leisure with itself. Yes, there *is* Peace ! In any event, come the sunshine and the gladness, or the darkness with its woes and pangs, we yet shall say, in the first and last watchwords of an alien faith—not ours, therefore, and yet ours, indeed, in deeper fulness : "Who shall separate us from that which *passeth knowledge* ?"

G. M. McC.

HERBERT SPENCER'S PHILOSOPHY: AN EXPOSITION.**IV.****"FIRST PRINCIPLES."****RELIGION AND SCIENCE: THE RECONCILIATION.**

STRIPPED of its aftergrowths of doctrine, and unencumbered by its parasites of dogma, Religion is definable as a theory of the beginning of things. For doctrine and dogma are in no way essentials of Religion. They are, indeed, not only useless, but also pernicious, since they mystify the great truth for which Religion stands. The explanation of Religion as a theory of original causation meets all the necessities of a perfect definition. It includes all the essentials and excludes all the non-essentials. While it excludes the innumerable petty doctrines and dogmas about which the various sects disagree, it includes that supreme element about which all are agreed. The only element common to all religious systems, and negatived by none, is the problem of original causation ; and for the solution of this overwhelming problem each creed has its own hypothesis. But, though these creeds differ as to the solution, they are unanimous in their assertion that there is a problem to be solved. The Polytheist solves it by appointing a separate little Deity to be the cause of every separate phenomenon ; the Monotheist has a big Deity as the one cause of all phenomena ; the Pantheist rolls his Deity into his phenomena, thus making the cause and the effect identical ; and the Atheist, in asserting that Matter is the one eternal existence, affirms Matter to be the cause of everything. Thus the Spencerian definition of Religion not only includes all that is fundamental in every variety of Theism and in every variety of Atheism, but it also excludes all that is not fundamental ; since, while it recognises the great general truth underlying all religions, it takes no cognisance of the special tenets of any.

The Spencerian definition of Science is equally comprehensive, though, perhaps, not equally original. Science means "all positive and definite knowledge of the order existing among surrounding phenomena ;" or, in better-known terms, Science is common sense extended

and made exact. This definition, like the definition of Religion, is perfect, because it is at once complete in its inclusiveness and complete in its exclusiveness. It embraces all that ordinary knowledge of common things which is really the foundation of Science, while it rejects all that metaphysical speculation which is really identical with nescience.

These rigid definitions help us in our reconciliation, because they show us the irreligious character of much that passes for Religion, and the unscientific character of much that passes for Science. For the irreligion of Religion and the nescience of Science have ever been more or less conspicuous. To begin with, Religion "has all along professed to have some knowledge of that which transcends knowledge, and has so contradicted its own teachings. While with one breath it has asserted that the cause of all things passes understanding, it has, with the next breath, asserted that the cause of all things possesses such or such attributes—can be so far understood. In the second place, while in great part sincere in its fealty to the great truth it has had to uphold, it has often been insincere, and consequently irreligious, in maintaining the untenable doctrines by which it has obscured this great truth. Each assertion respecting the nature, acts, or motives of that Power which the Universe manifests to us has been repeatedly called in question and proved to be inconsistent with itself or with accompanying assertions. Yet each of them has been age after age insisted on, in spite of a secret consciousness that it would not bear examination. Just as though unaware that its central position was impregnable, Religion has obstinately held every outpost long after it was obviously indefensible. And this naturally introduces us to the third and most serious form of irreligion which Religion has displayed—namely, an imperfect belief in that which it especially professes to believe. How truly its central position *is* impregnable Religion has never adequately realised. In the devoutest faith as we habitually see it there lies hidden an innermost core of scepticism, and it is this scepticism which causes that dread of inquiry displayed by Religion when face to face with Science. Obligated to abandon, one by one, the superstitions it once tenaciously held, and daily finding its cherished beliefs more and more shaken, Religion shows a secret fear that all things may some day be explained; and thus itself betrays a lurking doubt whether that Incomprehensible Cause of which it is conscious is really incomprehensible." These are examples of the irreligion of Religion.

Now let us take parallel examples of the nescience of Science. "In its earlier stages, Science, while it began to teach the constant relations of phenomena, and so discredit the belief in separate personalities as

the causes of them, itself substituted the belief in causal agencies which, if not personal, were yet concrete. When certain facts were said to show 'Nature's abhorrence of a vacuum,' when the properties of gold were explained as due to some entity called 'aureity,' and when the phenomena of life were attributed to a 'vital principle,' there was set up a mode of interpreting the facts which, while antagonistic to the religious mode, because assigning other agencies, was also unscientific, because it professed to know that about which nothing was known. Having abandoned these metaphysical agencies—having seen that they were not independent existences, but merely special combinations of general causes—Science has more recently ascribed extensive groups of phenomena to electricity, chemical affinity, and other like general powers. Accounting thus for all phenomena, those of Life and Thought included, it has not only maintained its seeming antagonism to Religion by alleging agencies of a radically unlike kind, but, in so far as it has tacitly assumed a knowledge of these agencies, it has continued unscientific. At the present time, however, the most advanced men of science are abandoning these latter conceptions, as their predecessors abandoned the earlier ones. Magnetism, light, heat, etc., which were awhile since spoken of as so many distinct imponderables, physicists are now beginning to regard as different modes of manifestation of some one universal force, and, in so doing, are ceasing to think of this force as comprehensible. In each phase of its progress Science has thus stopped short with superficial solutions—has unscientifically neglected to ask what was the nature of the agents it so familiarly invoked." Hence the nescience of Science.

In the foregoing facts we discover the real cause of the fearful feud between the twin-brothers Religion and Science. *That cause is—imperfect development.* The nearer Religion approaches to perfection, the nearer does Science approach to Religion. In its lowest stages of development, Religion professed to have a complete knowledge of that which transcends knowledge, and so trespassed upon the territory of Science; while, in its lowest stages of development, Science clung to a large amount of nescience, and so trespassed upon the territory of Religion. In the higher stages of development each began to relinquish those portions of its domain which by right belonged to the other; and thus Religion began to admit that its comprehension of the Incomprehensible was not complete, and Science began to admit that its metaphysical entities were merely attributes of an unknown entity. When Science shall hold undivided sway over the known, scientifically rejecting everything that is unknown, then Religion will hold undivided sway over the unknown, religiously rejecting everything that is known; and then all antagonism between them will disappear. Then Religion

and Science, mutually cancelling their antagonisms, will reach the stage of perfect development, and will be in perfect harmony.

In this process of development Religion has rendered, and will still render, signal service to Science ; just as Science has rendered, and will still render, signal service to Religion. To how vast an extent Religion is the debtor of Science, and Science the creditor of Religion, probably neither fully knows. And if Science knows, it certainly does not care to acknowledge, how much it owes to Religion. On the one hand, Religion, by calling in question certain assumptions of Science, and by searchingly criticising every new scientific truth, has restrained Science from usurping functions which rightfully belong to Religion. On the other hand, Science, by constantly forcing upon Religion beliefs which it struggled to reject, has kept Religion within that sphere which is its only legitimate boundary. And so Religion has gradually made Science less unscientific, and Science has gradually made Religion less irreligious.

Thus it will be seen that each step in the development of Religion has been at the same time a step in the development of Science ; while each step in the progress of Science has been at the same time a step in the progress of Religion. The progress has, indeed, been two-fold. Every advance has been at once an advance towards the knowable and an advance towards the unknowable. An illustration will make this point clear.

Primitive man, in his ignorance, regarded Matter as both creatable and destructible. With him it was self-evident that something could come from nothing, and go back again to nothing. He plucked a leaf from a shady tree, or a feather from a wild bird, and put the leaf or the feather on his log-fire. It was burnt up, and became invisible to the eye ; and the savage concluded that it had vanished into absolute nothing. Or he watched a threatening cloud form upon the azure vault of heaven. Not knowing that the cloud had existed previously in a more diffused and transparent form, he believed that it had just begun to be, and that the matter of which it was composed had sprung from absolute nothing. What uncivilised man *thought* was a self-evident truth we of to-day *know* is a self-evident error ; and any educated person who might be found denying that Matter is both indestructible and uncreatable would hear more than he liked about lunatics and asylums. That Matter is eternal is now a mere truism. Yet every step in Science by which we establish the great truth that Matter is eternal is a step by which we establish the greater truth that Matter is unknowable. Since Chemistry teaches us how to change Matter from one state to another, it teaches us how much we know of Matter ; but, since Chemistry proves that of Matter in its ultimate essence we can know nothing, it proves

how little we know. The more clearly we see that Matter is eternal in its existence, the more clearly do we see that its existence is an eternal mystery.

And thus is justified the statement that every advance is an advance in two directions at once—an advance towards the knowable and an advance towards the unknowable. This progress is as much in the direction of the definitely unknown as in that of the definitely known, and points just as positively to the supernatural* as to the natural. "Though, as knowledge approaches its culmination, every unaccountable and seemingly supernatural fact is brought into the category of facts that are accountable or natable; yet, at the same time, all accountable or natural facts are proved to be in their ultimate genesis unaccountable and supernatural. And so there arise two antithetical states of mind, answering to the opposite sides of that existence about which we think." Our consciousness of that existence on its natural side is Science; our consciousness of it on its supernatural side is Religion.

Manifestly, then, Religion and Science are correlative terms, each depending for its existence upon the other; and the apparent antagonism between them arises from the necessary imperfections of both. In the natural course of their evolution, Religion and Science will be purified from these imperfections, and the reconciliation will be complete. Nearer to this perfect reconciliation our accumulating knowledge is bringing us every day. Every new fact in Science, while it serves to impress in bolder relief our knowledge of Appearances, serves also to define with greater clearness the truth that of the Reality behind these Appearances we can have no knowledge. That this Reality is absolutely unknowable is the one transcendent certainty towards which intelligence has from its very dawn been advancing. From the first, Religion, in spite of all its crude and vulgar anthropomorphism, has dimly discerned the existence of that Power manifested to us through all phenomena; and Religion, gradually dropping its concrete conceptions, will ultimately find its goal in the abstract Unknowable. Towards that goal Science, too, inevitably tends as it approaches the boundary-line of its sphere; since the more rigorously it examines things as they seem, the more it is convinced that things as they really are are for ever unknowable. So, "by continually seeking to know, and being continually thrown back with a deepened conviction of the impossibility of knowing, we may keep alive the consciousness that it is alike our highest wisdom and

* We use this word not in its theological, but in its scientific, sense. Etymologically, as well as scientifically, it means super-natural—*i.e.*, beyond the natural.

our highest duty to regard that through which all things exist as the Unknowable."

Adhering strictly to our definitions of Religion and Science—regarding the words in their highest and widest acceptations—we discover that a course of study in Science imparts a superior religious culture, exactly as a course of study in Religion strengthens strong scientific conclusions. There is, as we know too well, a pseudo-religion, which bluntly and persistently refuses to be reconciled to true Science, just as there is a pseudo-science which as bluntly and as persistently refuses to be comforted by true Religion. But "true Science and true Religion are twin-sisters, and the separation of either from the other is sure to prove the death of both. Science prospers exactly in proportion as it is religious; and Religion flourishes in exact proportion to the scientific depth and firmness of its basis."* When Science has passed beyond the superficial into the profound, when it has ceased to regard adding up figures and measuring distances and dissolving compounds and labelling bottles as the end of all existence, it has become really religious.

"So far from Science being irreligious, as many think, it is the neglect of Science that is irreligious—it is the refusal to study the surrounding creation that is irreligious.....Devotion to Science is a tacit worship—a tacit recognition of worth in the things studied, and by implication in their Cause. It is not a mere lip-homage, but a homage expressed in actions—not a mere professed respect, but a respect proved by the sacrifice of time, thought, and labour."†

But it is not in one way alone that true Science is really religious. It is religious in this—that it imbues us with a genuine respect for, and a genuine faith in, those unerring uniformities which the universe exhibits. It impresses us with a firm belief in the constant relations of things, and in the never-varying actions of cause and effect. In place of the heaven which tradition gives as the reward for well-doing, in place of the hell which tradition gives as the punishment for evil-doing, Science wisely recognises the natural rewards and punishments in the constitution of things. In spite of wrong-doing, some vaguely hope to escape Eternal death and to win Eternal life; but Science finds that the pain resulting from bad actions and the pleasure resulting from good actions are equally inevitable. Science sees that the laws to which all must bow are immutable, and that in obeying them we are sowing the seeds of a perfect life, and consequently of a perfect happiness. And so Science, in asserting the eternal principles of things, and in recog-

* Professor Huxley.

† Herbert Spencer, "Education."

nising the necessity of eternal obedience to these principles, shows itself to be truly religious.

There is yet a third religious aspect of Science. Nothing but Science can give us proper ideas of our existence and of our relations to the universe. While it teaches us all that can be known, it teaches us that there are limits beyond which we can know nothing. And this teaching it imparts, not by mere assertions, but by positive knowledge—by pointing out to us in all directions the thought-boundaries which none may pass. It shows us, in a manner in which naught else can show, how little is human intelligence when side by side with that which transcends human intelligence. “While towards the traditions and authorities of man its attitude may be proud, before the impene-trable veil which hides the Absolute its attitude is humble—a true pride and a true humility.” Science, more than anything else, truly *knows* that all things are unknowable, and that the Universal Power of which Life and Thought are manifestations is not only beyond man’s knowledge, but beyond man’s conception.

Here is the reconciliation. Here, too, is Agnosticism. In this grandest and most awful of all truths—the truth that the Ultimate Cause transcends human intelligence—Religion and Science are united. This truth, while it meets all the exactions of the most inexorable logic, gives to the religious sentiment its widest and its only legitimate scope. Hence, by unifying Religion and Science we form the groundwork of the Agnostic Philosophy.

Next month, in the final article on Part I. of “First Principles,” we shall anticipate some objections to this basis of Agnosticism.

IGNOTUS.

THE EVANGEL OF PANONTISM.

WHETHER I have the gift of exposition I sometimes question. But what I mean by Panontism I am perhaps able to make clear.

All my principles have been evolved from my personal experience. Ideas have interest to me only as the results of phantasy and emotion. And the thoughts and systems of other men impress me just to the extent that they correspond to a particular point in my spontaneous evolution.

At an early period of my life the metaphysician who most attracted me was Thomas Brown, a man undeservedly neglected by the present generation. Brown charmed me chiefly from the poetical garb in which he arrayed his thoughts. After a while Fichte gained for a season dominion over me. The enchantment here was the ethical elevation. Then came Spinoza with his Pantheism. However, I read Spinoza's books more as discipline than as sustenance; for from boyhood I had been, consciously or unconsciously, a Pantheist. My Pantheism, as it ultimately shaped itself, I called poetical and passionate. It had kindredness with Neoplatonism and with the Oriental philosophies.

Like all earnest reformers, I am conservative, and I change my opinions very slowly. Defects I may have in a larger degree than my neighbours; but fickleness is not one of them. If I am ever guilty of real or apparent inconsistencies, it is from the impetuosity of my character, not from intellectual waywardness or caprice.

As an Idealist of the Idealists, I abhor abstractions. Idealists and Abstractionists never understand each other. But nearly all English thinkers are either ghastly Abstractionists or hard Materialists. Hence, my successive evangels, which perchance might have found acceptance in France or Germany, have been unheeded in England. The Evangel of Panontism may not be more fortunate than its predecessors.

What is the cardinal principle of Panontism? This—that instinct is the deepest, the grandest, the pervading force in the universe. Our aim, therefore, should ever be to blend as instinct with the instinct of immensity. Everything is divine in the degree that it is instinctive. Hitherto there has been the idolatry of reason. Leibnitz and the other pedants and sophists have chattered about supreme reason. But supreme reason could not create; and, even if it could, it would not, from foreseeing inevitable failure. Instinct, on the other hand, creates from inherent and inevitable impulse. Electricity and instinct's agencies

of every kind herein resemble instinct itself. What instinct and its manifold agencies achieve how can reason judge? It is more needful for the recognition of instinct, the essential energy of the universe, to dethrone the philosophies than to uproot the theologies; for few philosophies are more than vague speculations or barren negations, whereas no theology is so base as to be completely destitute of the instinctive leaven.

Does Panontism reject God? The God of the schoolmen and the theologians it certainly rejects; but in the place of that God it puts something incomparably sublimer—the miracle and the mystery towards which mystical sympathy spontaneously soars. All interpretation of nature or of history has hitherto proceeded on the assumption that there is a moral government of the universe. Panontism denies that there is a moral government of the universe—refuses to the universal instinct both omniscience and providence. If a good, wise, just being rules the universe, how comes it to pass that there is so little trace of the goodness, the wisdom, and the justice? All history is a picture of man's wretchedness and guilt; and in famines, pestilences, numberless horrible diseases, Nature is as cruel to man as man is cruel to his brother. What is the sea? A vast scene of ceaseless slaughter. And how do many beasts of the field and birds of the air live? By seizing and murdering, through the right of the strong, helpless and innocent creatures; yet priests tell us that there is a loving father in heaven, and pretentious optimists scribble Theodicaeas. I must confess that in my own career this loving father I have never seen. My life could not have been more unhappy, more desolate and despairing, if the most malignant monster had employed his utmost ingenuity in inventing torments to be flung at my defenceless head. I feel that I am mocked when I am urged to rely on God's mercy. During the two thousand years of Christianity's reign what has God's mercy done for the world? Look at the wars of religion alone since the advent of the Gospel, and confess that they are enough of themselves to counterbalance all the blessings which are usually attributed to Christianity. At the wrong and the woe which have abounded in every age, and perhaps more in the mediæval age than in any other, I care not now to do more than glance: my object is not to make a pathetic appeal, or to present a rhetorical delineation. If, however, we admit that there is no moral purpose in the universe, we must admit that there is no need of vindicating the universe; we must confess that the universe is nothing but the plenitude and outpouring of life. Against what is tragical in Nature's exuberance of vitality man has no solace and no shield but in his dreams and illusions. Of these Panontism would not rob him—would, on the contrary, multiply them a thousandfold. It would first teach man to throw books and systems and creeds and churches aside,

and to behold the universe as it is, in its instinctive outflow ; and then to array it in the glories of passion and of phantasy. To be a dreamer to the end must be the aspiration of the Panontist, and then to enter Nirvana through a blaze of rainbows.

Panontism and Nirvanaism are instinctively related ; but neither the one nor the other can give any countenance to Agnosticism, forasmuch as whether God, in the ordinary acceptance of the word, is recognised or rejected is to them both a matter of supreme indifference ; besides that, to them both mere negations are distasteful. Far rather would I be a Gnostic of the olden days than an Agnostic of these days ; for I should have positive principles and a large heritage of beautiful visions. That many of the Agnostics are earnest and gifted men I doubt not ; and that they should have an intense repugnance to be called Atheists is natural. But Agnosticism, from its frigid character and hesitating attitude, has no chance of gaining a wider empire than Comtetism. Every metaphysical doctrine must be a moral doctrine ; never was the identity more signally and triumphantly seen than in Stoicism. From Agnosticism what moral deductions can be drawn, what moral nutriment can be obtained ?

In connection with the Evangel of Panontism I preach the Evangel of Holiness and Heroism. Both in name and in deed these have been from of old in the world. They have, however, been exceptional ; to make them universal is what I desire. But how ? By the consecration and cultivation of instinct through passion, poetry, and dream ; by showing that life and death are identical, that life is a form of death and death a form of life. The Panontist must feel at every moment that he is in sympathetic contact with the instinct of universal nature. From that continuous contact death and life cease to be for him more than mere words.

The primordial foe of Panontism is Rationalism, to which modern communities pay such lavish and abject homage, and which is their curse of curses. Rationalism demoralises by paralysing, by sterilising. One thing can Rationalism, so impotent, so barren otherwise, never fail to produce—anarchy. There is the prevalent dread throughout Europe, throughout the world, of social convulsions from social causes. But the real, the terrible, evil is that Rationalism has dried up, destroyed, the cohesive elements. Rationalism is delusive and dangerous in fashions to which small regard is paid. For instance, take what is called national education. The English do everything in headlong, haphazard mode. Hence their history is full of blunders which could easily have been foreseen, and of calamities which could easily have been prevented. National education they approached with their customary chaotic recklessness. The Board School system arose—a colossal absurdity involving

an enormous expenditure. Intellectual instruction should always be subordinated to moral and religious training ; this to the entire national life ; and this, again, to the life of Nature, the All-Mother. But the Board School system makes war on that which hitherto has been the strength of England—the home ; and it substitutes paltry pedantic cramming for genuine intellectual instruction. The Board School child is as insufferably conceited as he is ridiculously ignorant ; gabbles glibly about the standards, of which, in imitation of the Sacraments, there are seven, but has not reached even the first standard—that of a little knowledge. Now, the thousands of uninformed, misinformed prigs that pour forth every year from the Board Schools are to be the citizens of the future ; citizens bound by no holy bond to each other or to the State ; worshippers not of the Goddess Reason, but of some semblance or figment or tradition thereof, and predestined Anarchists, still more from the lack of any humanising sentiment than from ignorance and insubordination.

As a positive doctrine, the most positive of doctrines, Panontism is not disposed to be aggressive, polemical, except from necessity. But, in its proclamation and adoration of instinct as the central reality of the universe, it has, at the outset, all the prejudices of mankind as its enemies. There is a common notion that instinct is something exclusively, often repulsively, bestial. Man is proud of the reason which distinguishes him from the brutes ; and he is always ready with some fine Platonic talk about the nobleness, the supremacy, of reason. But it is just because man is a reasonable being that he is so unfortunate and so sinful. It is reason, not passion or phantasy, which leads him fatally astray. Instinct, on the contrary, is infallible. One tragical fact is manifest, that the more communities are rationalised, the more they are corrupt and miserable. Reason is in the world, and we cannot drive it out of the world. The greater the pity, perhaps, though to the Rationalist it may seem blasphemy to say so. While we cannot expel reason, we can compel it to take its due place. We can do more : we can train it to become itself instinctive and to be the servant of instinct. The most beautifully instinctive of all creatures is the bird : it is instinct's holiest representative. Why did man people heaven with winged angels ? Because the bird typified to man that which is most instinctive in himself. We have better wings than those of the bird, than those of the angel—the wings of imagination. Inspired by instinct, let us use those wings and soar evermore as far from earth as we can. Instinct in human hearts, in human communities, would purify, sanctify, in the same degree that it fructified. Nature's strongest impulse is towards fecundation. Reason, or at least the reason of the sectarians and the schoolmen, teaches us to view that impulse with disgust. But in the

deepest religions of the ancients it was hallowed so as to excite awe, amazement, and adoration, though, in the degeneracy and defilement of those religions, when the priest's cunning brain usurped the place of man's creative phantasy, much that was loathsome was gradually introduced. Undeterred by the remembrance of the priestly abominations, let us once more consecrate what the deepest religions in their best days consecrated.

In February, the month of purification, I was born ; and I have felt every one of my sorrows to be a purifying fire. Therefore, I cannot be suspected of any desire or design to deify the appetites of man. But the more man is swayed by phantasy, by passion, by instinct, in its noblest sense, the less he is ruled by appetites. As it is the idolatry of reason which drives men to anarchy, it is the coldness of reason which flings them into pollution. Men can dispense with many things ; but they cannot dispense with heat. To teach men to live without heat is the leading aim of the Rationalists. In their imperious need of heat, men are glad to get it in any form, however foul and degrading. If you imprison a human being in an ice-house, do not wonder that when he breaks out he rushes up to his neck into a cesspool. Panontism would give man the heat without which he cannot live : as ethereal fire would give it to him. If fire, celestial fire, is the main agent of fecundation, it is also the main agent of purification. This ought never to be forgotten, and frees me from the possible charge of striving to make men the slaves of their senses. It is from the thralldom of the senses that I would deliver them by raising their eyes and their souls to the altars where the ethereal fire is for ever burning.

I have no love of the paradoxical or the eccentric. I have no ambition to be lauded as an original thinker. Very near must I be to the end of a very foolish, very sorrowful career. Panontism came to me of its own accord ; it is my final message to my brethren. I do not forsake the God of my youth ; I merely, through intenser sympathy and profounder insight, recognise and adore him by another name. Names to me are nothing ; and I am not disinclined to give the name of God to that instinctive and universal life which hitherto has been given to the phantom of a benevolent providence. Religion is the strongest and grandest force in man's world ; and, whatever else Panontism may be, it is above all a religion—a religion that would worship the miraculous and inscrutable principle of immensity, interiorly by mystical ecstasy, exteriorly by symbol and rite and festival and sublimest, most opulent, charity.

Instinct of Instincts, pardon me for so feebly setting forth what thou art ! Send, when I am no more, young and valiant prophets to convert to the *Evangel* of Panontism all the nations !

WILLIAM MACCALL.

GEORGE ELIOT'S LIFE.*

THE whole reading world has looked forward with keen and lively interest to the publication of these memoirs. The literary abilities of the editor were unknown; the amount of material which might be available the public could only guess; but we had learnt something of the depth of George Eliot's experiences, of the breadth and intensity of her perceptions, of the lofty grandeur of her mind, and of the loving, ocean vastness of her sympathies. We knew, also, that she had a history; that she had experienced exceptional intellectual development; that she had, for such a nature, to face exceptional crises; and that she had fought her battle well, until, at last, her name was enshrined in the hearts of multitudes.

Our anticipations have not been disappointed. In reading the biographies of others whom we knew through their literary work, and whom we had placed on pedestals and worshipped, perhaps, as "something more than men and little less than angels," we have discovered that they possessed more than an ordinary share of the weaknesses and littlenesses of common men, and we would fain blot out from our memory the painful results of our nearer acquaintance, and, forgetting that our heroes were little, dream of them as great. But it has not been so with this biography, which, on account of the loving skill of the editor, as well as the unique character of the subject, is, perhaps, the most deeply-interesting and strongly-helpful biography of our time.

We naturally look first for some record of George Eliot's early intellectual development; for it is evident from her books that she passed through that struggle which sometimes wrecks the happiness and sense of security of the weak, if they are forced to enter upon it, but which is faced voluntarily by the strong and courageous, chastening and inspiring their best intents. We were not prepared to find that this crisis had arrived so early in George Eliot's career, or that the change was quite so great or so rapid. Those of us who know anything of religious people in country places, of the class to which George Eliot's father belonged, know how strong are the religious influences that brood over the early years of young people, especially girls. In matters

* George Eliot's Life, as Related in her Letters and Journals. Arranged and edited by her Husband, J. W. Cross. Three volumes. 42s. (William Blackwood & Sons, Edinburgh and London.)

religious an ultra-conservatism prevails, which remains unassailed by the intellectual progress which is rife in large centres of civilisation and commerce. This is the case even now; but in the days of George Eliot's youth—that is, sixty years ago—in such a country as the neighbourhood of Griff is described to have been, where the only things of interest that happened in the day were the passing of one coach at ten o'clock and another at three o'clock, this condition of things must have been infinitely worse.

George Eliot was born just three months after the notorious Massacre of Peterloo; but it is evident that neither the distress nor sympathy with the agitation was found at Griff. Mr. Evans was a comfortable, prosperous man, and a Tory. "To my father's mind," wrote George Eliot, "the noisy teachers of revolutionary doctrine were, to speak mildly, a variable mixture of the fool and the scoundrel; the welfare of the nation lay in a strong Government, which could maintain order." And, no doubt, he agreed with the decision of Lords Eldon and Redesdale, that "every meeting for Radical reform was not merely a seditious attempt to undermine the existing Constitution and Government by bringing it into contempt and hatred, but it was an overt act of treasonable conspiracy against that Constitution of government, including the King as its head." Mr. Evans was as conservative in religion as in politics. During her school-days George Eliot naturally found many things to occupy and interest her, and such a strong and ardent intellectual nature as she had proved she possessed at a very early age would be sure to take a very prominent position in a provincial school. But we can easily imagine that the supply of subjects of interest was not equal to the demand; and we think that Mr. Cross has very happily applied to her her own description of Maggie Tulliver at the same age (thirteen):—"A creature full of eager, passionate longings for all that was beautiful and glad; thirsty for all knowledge; with an ear straining after dreamy music that died away and would not come near to her; with a blind, unconscious yearning for something that would link together the wonderful impressions of this mysterious life, and give her soul a sense of home in it. No wonder, when there is this contrast between the outward and the inward, that painful collisions come of it." Was it any wonder that such a nature, amid such surroundings, should try to find satisfaction in conventional religion? Nothing else was offered; nothing else had she definitely conceived. So, at the age of nineteen, we find her a most exemplary Christian, with the ideas and the phraseology of provincial Methodism of that day all complete. It excites a smile to read her letters of that day; and yet it was all terribly serious to her:—"I must believe that those are happiest who are not fermenting themselves by engaging in projects for earthly

bliss, who are considering this life merely a pilgrimage, a scene calling for diligence and watchfulness, not for repose or amusement." "I have enjoyed Hannah More's letters: the contemplation of so blessed a character as hers is very salutary." "Oh, that I could live for eternity! that we could realise its nearness!" With reference to Wilberforce she writes: "Oh, that I might be made as useful in my lowly and obscure station as he was in the exalted one assigned to him!" And then we come to a little confession which seems to account, to a large extent, for this morbid religious phase:—"My mind has been much clogged lately by langour of body, to which I am prone to give way, and for the removal of which I shall feel thankful." Extravagant piety is often more closely associated with the physical condition than people imagine. It was once said that "a man with a bad liver cannot be a good Christian." Many a Christian saint has been indebted to a bad liver for his saintliness; but it assuredly needs a good liver for a man or woman to be a consistent Sceptic or an earnest Humanitarian.

In Miss Evans's case, however, the impetus to right thinking was other than physical. It was her ardent nature seeking an outlet, struggling to be free; and when she has found that freedom she speaks of her early life in a very rational way: "I used to go about like an owl, to the great disgust of my brother; and I would have denied him what I now see to have been quite lawful amusements." It is interesting to put together the two references to Hannah More—the one which we have quoted, in which the contemplation of her character is described as "salutary," and the one which was penned ten years later:—"I am glad you detest Mrs. Hannah More's letters. I like neither her letters, nor her books, nor her character. She was that most disagreeable of all monsters, a blue-stocking—a monster that can exist only in a miserable state of society, in which a woman with but a smattering of learning or philosophy is classed along with singing-mice and card-playing pigs." What a wholesome radical change had taken place during these ten years! And this change that had taken place, in its rapidity and its mode, was only another instance of what we have frequently observed—namely, the certainty with which intellectual vitality struggles through untold obstacles towards maturity and freedom.

Just as the flower in our garden, through long cold winds and early frosts, though appearing nipped and shrivelled, is yet gathering together all its latent forces with which to burst forth into wondrous beauty as soon as the external conditions shall be favourable, and we are astonished at its marvellously-rapid development under the first hour of spring sunshine and warm breeze; so, where there is in the individual man or woman the restlessness and ambition of intellectual strength and individuality, where there is a latent force of will and courage, the growing

desire to know, and capacity to suffer for the sake of knowledge—there, in the midst of circumstances the most adverse to the growth and development of that reverent Scepticism which is the invariable characteristic of a strong intellectuality, the true nature will gather together its inherent forces, and will take advantage of the first helpful influence to manifest itself. A certain theological or religious garb may be worn, perforce, for a time ; but it never really fits, although the wearer may not be conscious of discomfort or friction : by-and-bye the great soul, that refuses to be bound in swaddling-clothes for ever, rends it asunder and casts it far away. Thus it was with George Eliot. The first warm spring-ray under which her intellectual life burst forth with a new vigour seems to have been Isaac Taylor's "Ancient Christianity," and the next Hennell's "Inquiry Concerning the Origin of Christianity." Immediately she turned her face towards the sun. "My whole soul has been engrossed in the most interesting of all inquiries for the last few days, and to what results my thoughts may lead I know not—possibly to one that will startle you ; but my only desire is to know the truth, my only fear to cling to error." This was written to Miss Lewis on November 13th, 1841, immediately after reading Charles Hennell's book. From this point she never looked back ; and the "results" at which she arrived *did* startle many of her friends. There could be no retrograde step in a nature such as hers. Four months later she wrote : "To *fear* the examination of any proposition appears to me an intellectual and moral palsy that will ever hinder the firm grasp of any subject whatever." The motto which she had previously chosen for herself, "*Certum pete finem*," might still be retained, now indicating her freedom from the dominion of bigotry and superstition, her courage in the pursuit of truth, and her determination to acquire knowledge.

George Eliot's new life was fostered and encouraged by the Brays and the Hennells, with whom she remained upon intimate terms for many years, and to whom, to a great extent, we are indebted for these volumes, which are largely composed of letters written to various members of these two households. Her reading, also, tended to strengthen and establish her new "views," and, in addition, her literary work was all in the same direction. This work was, for a considerable time, the translation of Strauss's "Leben Jesu."

To those who are apt to suppose that Scepticism is a dreary thing, that to lose the orthodox faith is to lose the light of life, the only condition of real enjoyment—and many do maintain it—it will be instructive to note how very much happier George Eliot was in her heresy than she had been in her orthodoxy. In the days of her piety she had been to London with her brother, and sat writing melancholy letters while he went to theatres and concerts ; now she went to both and found in

them inexpressible delight. She writes to Miss Sibree: "I heard Mendelssohn's new oratorio, 'Elijah,' when I was in London. It has been performed four times in Exeter Hall, to as large an audience as the building would hold—Mendelssohn himself the conductor. It is a glorious production, and altogether I look upon it as a kind of sacramental purification of Exeter Hall, and a proclamation of indulgence for all that is to be perpetrated there during the month of May." Elsewhere she says: "I can rejoice in all the joys of humanity, in all that serves to elevate and purify feeling and action." Many also say that the only incentive to morality is to be found in the Evangelical faith. This is what George Eliot said, with impressive energy, on one occasion, at Mr. Bray's house: "I say it now, and I say it once for all, that I am influenced in my conduct at the present time by far higher considerations, and by a nobler idea of duty, than I ever was while I held the Evangelical belief." And it was this noble idea of duty that all through her life made her sensitive, delicately-strung nature strong to endure any coldness and indifference and to suffer any pain for the cause of truth and right. We think we have, perhaps, the highest note of her loftiest inspiration in the words of her Fedalma, in "The Spanish Gipsy":—

"Yes, say that we shall fail. I will not count
On aught but being faithful.
I will seek nothing but to shun base joy.
The saints were cowards who stood by to see
Christ crucified. They should have thrown themselves
Upon the Roman spears, and died in vain.
The grandest death to die in vain for love—
Greater than rules the courses of the world."

We are reminded of an account given some time ago, by one who knew George Eliot, of an interview with her which impressively bears upon this point. "I remember how, at Cambridge, I walked with her once in the Fellows' Garden at Trinity, on an evening of rainy May, and she, stirred somewhat beyond her wont, and taking as her text the three words which have been used so often as the inspiring trumpet-calls of men—the words God, Immortality, Duty—pronounced, with terrible earnestness, how inconceivable was the first, how unbelievable was the second, and yet how peremptory and absolute was the third. Never, perhaps, have sterner accents affirmed the sovereignty of impersonal and uncompromising law. I listened, and night fell; her grave majestic countenance turned towards me like a sybil's in the gloom. It was as though she withdrew from my grasp, one by one, the two scrolls of promise, and left me the third only, awful with inevitable fates." And this abiding sense of duty, which was her strength and inspiration and

the basis of her widespread moral influence, was natural to her. It was seen in the way in which she denied herself in the days of Evangelical piety, and in the zealous activities of those orthodox days, which for many years were remembered by the recipients of her sympathy and assistance, who said, when she removed to Coventry, that they should never see the like of Miss Evans again. It was seen, too, when she resolved to take her stand by truth, as she had discovered it, and had to regret, as many a great soul has been constrained to regret, that, "while mathematics are indubitable, immutable, and no one doubts the properties of a triangle or a circle, doctrines infinitely important to men are buried in a charnel heap of bones, over which nothing is heard but the barks and growls of contention." It was also seen when she resolved that she would refuse compliance with the old forms, and would boldly assert her freedom and independence by giving up going to church. This resolve led to such a rupture between her father and herself that he put into an agent's hands the lease of the house in Foleshill Road with the intention of going to live with his married daughter. George Eliot, however, was nothing daunted, and boldly made up her mind to go into lodgings at Leamington, and support herself, if possible, by teaching. Her strong sense of duty was seen no less, in our opinion, in her willingness, for love's sake, to make some little personal sacrifice and avoid occasions of causing suffering to her father by returning to him and considering his religious prejudices, which she did to the end of his life, without begging her mind or destroying her independence; for the duty done was nobler than the freedom sacrificed, the service thus rendered more worthy than the mere assertion of an individual right. To the last year of her life she held that she had not been to blame in this matter, but confessed that "few things had occasioned her more regret than the temporary collision with her father, which might, she thought, have been avoided by a little management." It was this crisis in her early days that decided her action and speech in many a later period of her life. The "soothing, strengthening, sacred influences of the home life, the home loves, the home duties" were always to her of infinite importance; and the fact that, in the enthusiasm of her new intellectual life, she had at one time, in her own case, jeopardised these probably permanently influenced her thought and speech. In 1843 she writes to Miss Hennell of the hopefulness and the disposition to proselytise that is experienced by the mind just liberated from "the wretched giant's bed of dogmas upon which it has been racked and stretched ever since it began to think;" but she adds that by-and-by "speculative truth begins to appear but a shadow of individual minds. Agreement between intellects seems unattainable, and we turn to the *truth of feeling* as the only universal bond of union. We find that the

intellectual errors which we once fancied were a mere incrustation have grown into the living body, and that we cannot, in the majority of cases, wrench them away without destroying vitality. We begin to find that, with individuals, as with nations, the only safe revolution is one arising out of the wants which their own progress has generated. It is the quackery of Infidelity to suppose that it has a nostrum for all mankind, and to say to all and singular, 'Swallow my opinions and you shall be whole.' It was this deep sympathy, united to intellectual strength and an ever-present sense of duty, that made her life and influence what they were, and supplied those particularly interesting features which must be dealt with in a future article.

F. SYDNEY MORRIS.

ENIGMA.

THERE is not a lady in the land
Without thy aid could ever be ;
The name of Lord would lose command,
And law become a fallacy.
Letters and learning both would die,
Men's lives would not be theirs an hour ;
Light be extinguished, love would fly,
And even language lose its power.

There were no pleasure for the good,
No ill could be, no old, no lame ;
There would be neither land nor flood,
And not a crime could meet with blame.
All would be swept from off the sphere,
And not an element remain.
Nor could an angel drop a tear
To mourn thy loss had wrought such pain.

THOMAS MEAD.

THE POPULAR RELIGIOUS FAITH.

FOURTH PAPER.

THE object aimed at in this paper is to prove that the Christian religion is based on logic, and not on revelation ; that its doctrines are due to councils, and not to the Gospels—at any rate, not to the three earlier ones ; that Aristotle had far more to do with the whole system than the Twelve Apostles ; and that it is indebted to syllogism rather than to inspiration. Every doctrine and dogma thereof has been inferred, argued out, and confirmed by councils ; and without such councils there could have been no Christianity such as we now have it.

Invisibility.—Invisibility is predicated of God. As the Old Testament asserts, “No man hath seen God at any time,” nor, indeed, can see him. Every man recognises a visible world ; but visibility of necessity implies invisibility ; and the hypostasis or personification of invisibility is the Invisible One.

Immateriality.—Again, every atom of matter is divisible. It must, at least, have an upper and lower surface with boundaries, and consequently may be divided ; but divisibility implies its contrary, which is indivisibility, and the hypostasis or personification of indivisibility is the Indivisible One. If indivisible, then also immaterial ; and hence we get the notion of an invisible, immaterial entity.

All-Pervading.—The visible world consists of material phenomena, and these phenomena are made up of logical accidents, such as form, colour, hardness, and so on ; but these accidents cannot be the *res ipsissima*, or they would not be accidents, but essentials. It is not the perfume that makes the rose, nor yet any given shape, nor the colour, nor any arrangement or number of petals. It is not five features which make the man, nor two hands, nor two legs, nor the colour of his skin, nor the hair which covers his head, nor any other phenomenon : there is something at the bottom of these, some invisible substratum, something unphenomenal—

That little slender thread,
That nameless something, which, when all else goes—
Hue, flavour, shape, and scent—still leaves the rose.

This “unknown something” we now call noumenon ; but it was formerly

called God or soul, and is referred to by Pope in the lines :

“ [The] body Nature is, and God the soul [noumenon].....
 Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
 Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
 Lives through all life, extends to all extent,
 Spreads undivided, operates unspent.”

This noumenon cannot be material ; it is *soul*, as Pope calls it, the hypostasis, the substratum, the noumenon of phenomena ; and this brings us to the third logical idea of Deity, as the all-pervading, the universal, ever-present noumenon, immaterial, invisible, and incapable of being divided.

Without Parts.—Once more, whatever is indivisible must be without parts, and, if the hypothetical Deity be logically indivisible, then must he be of necessity without parts, otherwise part might be taken from part. If without parts, then must he be unlike any visible thing in heaven above, in the earth beneath, or the waters under the earth. Consequently, no similitude can be made of such a Being, for no similitude can be made wholly without form and parts. Logic carries us thus far, without any great depth of thought. It demonstrates that the Invisible One is also indivisible, immaterial, without parts, without form, without similitude, but omnipresent.

Infinity.—Continuing the same simple reasoning, we come next to finity, which necessarily implies infinity ; and the hypostasis or personification of infinity is the Infinite One. Now, infinity must extend to duration and space, knowledge and power ; hence the Infinite One must be all-wise, all powerful, omnipresent, and eternal.

Creator.—Again, the idea of something must also imply the idea of nothing. “Something” must be material, visible or discernible by the senses, partible, finitive. The opposite we call nothing ; and this “nothing” is the ens which logicians call Deity. By syllogism, therefore, we now get the idea of creation, or the production of the opposite of nothing. All this is the straightforward inference of logical deduction, and needs no revelation or inspiration to make known. Any one with the least power of reasoning can go thus far without difficulty.

Unity.—Come we now to the idea of Unity. This idea is to be inferred from several premises. Let us explain : If deity is indivisible and without parts, he cannot be other than one, for all that is more than one can be broken up into elements or units. Again, if Deity is infinite, he must also be one, or we get the absurdity of two infinities and two universals, which would be plainly self-destructive. What fills *all* space and all time cannot share that universally with another.

It would need very little philosophy to get thus far. Every one

capable of following out a simple argument could prove thus much. From the visible world around he could infer the hypothetical existence of a Being, invisible, eternal, infinite, and formless—without parts, filling all space, all-powerful, and all-wise ; immaterial, the cause of causes, the creator of something out of nothing. Such knowledge as this would require no revelation, no inspiration, no prophet ; but merely a mind capable of thinking, a mind no more profound than that of the ordinary readers of this article.

The Second Person of the Deity.—The next step is not quite so simple. It takes us to the second person of the Deity—the present Christian idea, wholly unthought of by the Old Testament writers. And yet the idea of gods many and of lords many was very general, so general indeed that it must be inferrable almost if not quite as readily as that of “ I, the Lord thy God, am one Lord.”

Let us see how the mind would work out this second idea. Creation implies more than one process ; it implies the idea and the execution ; unchangeability and change ; unity and multiplicity. Here we have two antagonistic commensurate hypostases : on one side, immutability, unity, and ideality ; on the other side, change, multiplicity, and creation. Both equally infinite ; both co-existent ; both commensurate. Of course, change can have no fixed limit ; multiplicity can have no ending ; and creation must be co-extensive as the idea thereof. It would not be logical that the same being should be both immutable and mutable ; both one and more than one ; both the abstract idea of creation and the substantive creation ; both the bird and the egg. As it would not be logical to combine these contradictories in the same Being, a second one must be assumed, equally infinite, co-existent, and co-eternal.

God the Father and God the Son.—As the creator merely carries out the idea of creation, the creator is begotten of him who conceived the idea. As multiplicity is but the repetition of unity, therefore unity is the nucleus from which multiplicity springs. As change is the outcome of immutability, therefore one is the father which begets the other, and the other is the begotten of that father. The father conceives the idea, the son carries it into execution.

This second class of ideas may be somewhat less obvious than the first, and, being in a measure contradictory, would be struggled against for a time ; but, being plainly deducible by logical reasoning, they would in time force themselves to the front, as Aristotle became the leader of theological thought.

In the first three Gospels we find no hint of this second person of the Deity, except, perhaps, in such parts as are plainly of later date ; but in the Fourth Gospel, when Greek philosophy had found its way into

Christian theology, this second infinite, called "The Logos," is introduced at the very beginning, as the wisdom of God in operation, the creator of all creation, whether material or not.

Unity of the Duality and Duality of the Unity.—Once having started the idea, logic would soon develop it. Starting with the premise that the second ens is the exponent of the first, both equally divine, co-existent, and co-equal, we come by a natural deduction to the dogma that the two are one; for, if Deity is indivisible, and the Logos is Deity, then it follows as a thing of course that the second is one with the first. The two are really one, because Deity is only one; yet are they really two, because one begets the other, and the second is begotten of the first. Logic must insist on this—either there are two independent infinities, two disunited eternals, two separate universals, two alls; or the son and the father are one. The former is most illogical, and therefore the second must be admitted by the *argumentum ad absurdum*. Of course, there is a crux whichever way one goes: in one case the logician is driven to admit of two universals; in the other case he must consent to the unity of two distinct persons. The question was, therefore, submitted to council after council: some gave the decision one way and some another. The three Councils of Constantinople in the fourth century, and the Council of Arles with Council of Carthage in the fifth century, decided that two persons could not be one, and therefore Jesus was not God. The Council of Nice, the Council of Sardica, and the Council of Ariminum, all in the fourth century, gave it the other way. Rome sided with the latter, and, as Rome was the stronger power, it insisted that the dual unity should be a doctrine essential to orthodoxy, without a belief in which *salvus non esse potest*. The question was not left to settle itself by independent appeal to the law and the testimony, but it was dogmatically settled for the Church by council, or rather by the dominant power of Rome and the battalions of her imperial upholders.

Having dogmatically settled that the founder of their religion was God equal to the Father, logic insisted on a host of other dogmas for the sake of consistency, and, as the subjects of these "consistencies" arose from time to time, new councils were called to determine whether or not they should be enforced.

Pre-existent State.—In the first place, there could not be a shadow of doubt that Jesus was the son of Mary. The mother must be admitted; but not, of necessity, Mary's husband as the father. Jesus must be mortal because he was born, he increased in growth, and he died. His birth from Mary would suffice for his mortality. But it has been already shown that Jesus, by the voice of several councils, is God, and therefore logic requires his pre-existence. For, if he created the world, he must

have existed before his birth in Bethlehem. So council confirmed the dogma of the pre-existence of Jesus.

Resurrection and Ascension.—If God, death could have no dominion over him, and, though he was crucified, dead, and buried, still he was not dead somehow, and his resurrection must be insisted on. Being God, the risen son of God and man, he must also return to heaven, his proper home, from whence, for a spiritual purpose, he had temporarily come down; and there, in heaven, he must resume his divine dignity and power. Consistency required thus much, and council confirmed the dogmas.

Original Sin and Atonement.—If Jesus died, and death is the wages of sin, then Jesus paid the wages of sin; but, being God, he could not sin. So the sin he died for was not his own sin, but the sin of man, inherent from Adam. Hence the doctrine of original sin and vicarious justification.

The Virgin Mary.—Here, however, comes in another difficulty. If all mankind, as the sons and daughters of Adam, are born in sin, then must Jesus, as the son of Mary, have inherited the taint. This is logical, no doubt; but council has already decided that Jesus is God, and consistency requires that he should not inherit the taint of sin. Council decides, therefore, that Mary, his mother, was immaculate. But, if death is the wages of sin, and Mary was immaculate, it must logically follow that Mary could not taste of death. Just so; and council admits the consistency. Once more, if Mary never died, she must have been translated into heaven like Enoch, Elijah, and Jesus: this also is admitted in the dogma of her assumption. So point by point is settled by council, till the whole has been formed into a tolerably consistent system. That system, however, is not built on the first three Gospels, but on the decisions of councils called from time to time to settle what shall be deemed orthodoxy and what shall be branded as heresy. No one pretends that the dogmas and doctrines of the Western Church would ever have grown out of the three earlier Gospels. They are solely logical consistencies confirmed by councils, with no more power or authority in the matter than the readers of this paper possess. Constantly contradicting each other, these councils consisted of men of like passions with ourselves; often very ignorant, always with a strong bias and *esprit de corps*, without the least pretence of inspiration, and in some cases, at least, teeming with envy, jealousy, and hatred. Such were the councils; such were the true founders of the Christian Church; and in this way was developed the religious system of Christendom, Aristotle not God being the fountain of inspiration, and Logic not the Holy Ghost being the guide to her doctrines and truths.

JULIAN.

MAN: WHENCE AND WHITHER?*

(Concluded.)

HAVING traced man's pedigree according to the Evolution theory, from primitive nebulous matter to his present commanding position, and found him possessed with reason and the power of controlling and regulating the forces of nature, our next inquiry is naturally for what purpose is he here and what will become of him eventually. Here we come to the most difficult problem of all ages, which has baffled learned men of all nationalities, and which will probably never be satisfactorily solved. Intimately connected with it is the almost as difficult problem, How was the universe caused at all? There are eminent scientific men who think they can conclusively show that the universe existed from eternity; others as positively assert that it must have been caused by a power outside and independent of itself; while others are equally convinced that it was self-created. But when we examine their arguments we find ourselves unable logically to accept any of their conclusions.

The Atheist declares that the universe has existed from eternity, not having been produced by any other agency, and, therefore, without any beginning; which necessarily implies the conception of infinite past time—an effort of which the human mind is quite incapable. The Pantheist declares that the universe evolved out of potential existence into actual existence by virtue of some inherent necessity; which is as unthinkable as the previous one, for potential existence must be either something, in which case it would be actual existence, or nothing, which it could not possibly be. But admitting, for the sake of argument, the possibility of potential existence as nothing, still we should have to account for its origin, which would involve us in an infinity of still more remote potentialities. The Theistic theory of creation by external agency implies either formation of matter out of nothing, which is inconceivable, or out of pre-existing materials, which leaves us under the necessity of showing the origin of the pre-existing elements, and,

* A paper read on October 20th, 1884, at Channing Hall, and on November 3rd, 1884, at Cutlers' Hall, Sheffield; illustrated with diagrams.

like the preceding theory, would involve us in an infinity of remote pre-existences. It also involves the existence of a potentiality outside matter, which must either be caused, which involves a prior cause, or uncaused, in which case it must be either finite or infinite. If it be finite, it must be limited, and, consequently, there must exist something outside its limits, which destroys the notion of its being a first cause. Therefore, it must be infinite. Also, as first cause, it must be independent ; for dependency would imply a more remote cause. The first cause must, therefore, be both infinite and absolute, which is an absurdity ; for a cause can only exist in relation to its effect, and therefore cannot be absolute ; and the fact of its being infinite deprives us of the only means of escape from the difficulty, by showing the impossibility of its being first of all absolute and afterwards cause ; for the infinite cannot become what it once was not.

Thus, then, we are driven to the conclusion that logic shows the Theistic conception of the origin of nature, equally as much as the Pantheistic and the Atheistic, to be utterly impossible ; but it must be admitted that if, instead of matter, we substitute time and space in our consideration of this most important matter, the Atheistic theory more nearly approaches the conceivable than either of the other two ; for by no mental effort can we conceive the formation of time and space either by external agency or inherent necessity. It is absolutely impossible for us to conceive the idea of the non-existence of either time or space.

Because the human mind cannot conceive the possibility of nature being produced by external agency, it does not follow that we are bound to admit the impossibility of the existence of an intelligence controlling Nature's laws ; for it is quite possible that such an existence may be, though our finite minds cannot comprehend it. The Agnostic philosopher, although he cannot logically demonstrate the existence of the Divine Being, yet declares that, inasmuch as this universe consists of existing phenomena, it is absolutely necessary that there should be some cause adequate for the production of the effects manifested. By this process of reasoning he arrives at the conclusion that there exists a something controlling nature, which is utterly incomprehensible—an ultimate reality, of which force and matter are alike merely the phenomenal manifestations. This ultimate reality, moreover, is intelligent.

We cannot recall the wonders of the evolutionary development of the universe without at once seeing that there is purpose at the bottom of all, and that chance is no factor in the process. We cannot believe that man is but a fortuitous concourse of atoms. Reason tells us clearly that we are here for a well-ordained purpose ; but what that purpose is we cannot tell. The old notion that our destiny is to prepare ourselves here, to live again in our bodily forms, play harps, and sing halleluyah

to all eternity, I regard as mere moonshine. Such a fate would be to me far worse than annihilation. But that we have a future destiny of some sort I have no doubt. We know we must die, and that when we die our bodily functions, including brain functions, will cease to be performed. Are we, then, annihilated? The answer of scientists is decisively "Yes, so far as we are concerned as sentient individual beings." Science teaches us that the three things which make up consciousness, or man's mental side, are thought, emotion, and volition; that they are inseparably bound up with the brain and the nervous system, whose functions they are; and that when the brain dies these functions cease. This is undeniable. Therefore, if there is any future existence, it is not one of consciousness. The power of muscular movement is arrested at death, and, therefore, we must admit that the power of thought, emotion, and volition ceases at death. Why should the appearance be deceptive in one case and not in the other? It is not the case of a separate entity in the body, but of a distinct function—an effect which ceases with its proper cause. It is absolutely certain, from the teaching of science, that the consciousness grows as the brain and body grow, varies according to the standard of health in the brain, and declines as the general vigour of the brain declines; and, therefore, we can but admit that it dies with the brain. We also learn from Embryology that consciousness evolved by slow degrees from unconsciousness, and that once there was no thought in any of us. Even if science were to admit that man's consciousness continued after death, it would be equally rational to admit that animals also had a future consciousness; for it is quite clear we have slowly evolved from the lowest germ of animal life. Man's very attributes are found in a lower degree in animals, and yet it is the possession of his lofty attributes which he says entitles him to conscious immortality. The intellectual qualities in animals differ from those in man only in degree, while in the possession of some of the highest moral attributes—such as courage, fidelity, patience, self-sacrifice, and affection—some of the lower animals, as the dog, the horse, and the ant, far surpass him. Even among human beings themselves these higher qualities, mental and moral, exist in all degrees, from their almost total absence in the savage up to the mental and moral splendour of a Buddha, a Socrates, a Disraeli, or a Gladstone. Are all these lower animals, savage men, and intellectual and moral geniuses, to have individual conscious immortality? If, as some say, man only and not animals are immortal, then the question naturally arises, When and how came man so? If he was always immortal, so were animals. If he became immortal later on, he must either have slowly acquired the gift, or it must have been suddenly conferred upon him. In either case there must have been a

particular moment when he became immortal. Can we conceive of such a thing as the species being mortal one moment and immortal the next? The question of *how* he became immortal is still more difficult, as the question *why*, or for what merit, is wholly unanswerable. Then, again, science teaches us that animal life, of whatever form, will vanish from the earth long before the inevitable decay of the planet itself. Geologists tell us that, in obedience to a general law, all species have their term of living. They appear, and after a time disappear. How absurd, then, to raise a question as to the conscious individual immortality of the countless myraids of a species that shall itself have utterly vanished without leaving a trace!

Are we, then, annihilated at death? Yes, as conscious individuals. We are bound to admit the force of all the arguments brought forward by science against the theory of a future conscious existence; but these arguments in no way affect the great problem of the "ego," or "self," which exists in all of us, irrespective of consciousness, memory, or other brain function. A man may be unconscious and yet live; therefore consciousness is not necessary to life. When we ask ourselves whether we shall be annihilated at death, we should first of all have a clear definition of the word "we" before we reply. What are we? What am I? I am not consciousness, which is but a function of one of my organs, the brain, and which merely enables me to know myself. Then what am I? I cannot conceive that I am anything but the energy or life-power developed by the aggregation of my life-particles, which causes the various organs of my body to perform their functions, as cerebrating, etc. The primordial germ of my body was a simple bioplasm, consisting of a combination of life-molecules, composed of energetic atoms. From these molecules evolved fresh molecules, which, under the laws of heredity and variation, acquired new properties; until, at last, a complex organism became developed, possessing far higher powers than those belonging to the primordial germ. As the development of species continued, higher forces became manifested; until, at last, the condition of man was reached, and a life-power developed of a much higher order than any previously known. This life-power, or human energy, is the "ego," the "self," the cause of the bodily functions, and is eternal. Kant declared there was a world unknown, independent of our conscious phenomenal world; and this we must admit to be true, for we have already granted the existence of an unknown cause, of which force and matter are merely the phenomenal manifestations. It is this outer world of unknown and invisible energy that the scientist finds himself unable to deal with. The death of the body is simply the cessation of cohesion, or dissolution of partnership, between the ultimate atoms of the plasm life-

molecules, by which dissolution the property called life ceases, and the atoms of the body assume their original condition, again containing their original sum of force. But what becomes of the huge force developed during the lifetime of the bodily organism? Does that vanish and become a thing of naught? My opinion is that this human force, which is the outcome of the complex union of the ultimate atoms of the plasm life-molecules, and which is but a phenomenal manifestation of the great incomprehensible cause of all phenomena, will, at the death of the body, be re-absorbed into the great animating spirit of the universe, and partake of the nature and properties of the Unknown. This is but my opinion, from which many may differ. I merely offer it as an opinion, and in no way shut my eyes to the great fact that man's destiny is a riddle as yet unsolved. We may safely leave the matter to be dealt with according to the wisdom of that unknown cause of all things, resting quite assured that we shall be far better disposed of than we could possibly dispose of ourselves, even if we had the power. We must bow the head in a truly scientific spirit, and reply to the great question, "I cannot tell."

"To be or not to be? that is the question," says the immortal Shakespeare; after which he sums up the whole argument in two short lines:—

"To die, to sleep. To sleep? perchance to dream—
Aye, there's the rub."

SACRED TIMES.

NOR only have certain books been separated from the rest of the literature of the world on the ground of their sacred character, but a similar process has been resorted to with regard to particular portions of time. The ages differ, the weeks vary, and the days are not all alike. In one epoch we have a special manifestation of God to the world, the like of which will be witnessed no more; and certain days are singled out in our own time to be especially honoured as peculiarly set apart by God for a work which belongs exclusively to him, and which concerns humanity only so far as the obligation of keeping the day holy is concerned. Here, again, we have a superstition based upon, and springing out of, a great truth. That each age and each land has an especial characteristic no one acquainted with history can for a moment deny. Qualities highly prized in one age come to be despised in another, and the particular form that intellectual development takes in one country is totally unlike that observed in a different land. In Ancient Greece, for instance, the love of the beautiful predominated to an extent that has never been witnessed before or since, while philosophy among the same people may be said to have almost reached a culminating point. Great thinkers followed each other in rapid succession, and when we reflect upon their learning we are almost startled by its grandeur. The love of the beautiful prevailed among the masses, and all that art could do was done to make it a lasting and permanent token of a glory which should probably never appear again when once its sun had set. Unrivalled genius and undying splendour became blended in one, and centred itself in the Athenian temples. The human mind laboured after perfection in form, and the highest ideal had its birth and its death in Greece. Refinement, culture, and learning held sway, and subordinated all else to their potent influence. But that age passed away, and all its characteristics disappeared. The Greece of the present time, as Byron has well said, " 'tis Greece, but living Greece no more."

In the great empire of Rome was developed an iron rule that bent everything to the indomitable energy of man. The stern discipline of a military force was the result, and an age of armed men whose power held the world in awe. Force consolidated law, and Rome will be the symbol of these two distinguishing characteristics through all time. All ages and all nations have their especial qualities. Even to-day Italy embodies Art, France Behaviour, Germany Thought, England Science,

and America Progress. This has been admirably worked out by William Maccall in his work on "National Missions." What, then, is the bearing of these illustrations on the present question? This, that Palestine was essentially the land of religion and of the ancient Jews, a people who, in the fervour of their enthusiasm, produced sacred books which have influenced to some extent the destinies of a hundred ages. The consequence is that these people have been elevated into an undue position in history, and have had ascribed to them a quasi-sacred character, making them especial favourites of God, and their literature text-books for the world, to remain in use through all time. The ages which gave birth to those writings have been called sacred ages, as the land has been termed a sacred land. Thus one country has been singled out for the especial favour of heaven, and from it all other lands must procure such inspiration as they may be able to obtain—a poor and meagre share in any case, and only like the light of the moon, a reflection of a great and central luminary, whose glory they cannot hope to share, but only dimly to shadow forth. At the present time Palestine is called the Holy Land, as though some sacredness still attached to its hills and valleys, its streams and lakes, its desolate villages and its rude and unlettered inhabitants.

Now, we object to considering one age more sacred than another, except in the sense before described—that it has tended more than any other to elevate the race. It will, perhaps, be maintained that Palestine has done this in the influence which her literature has exercised over the world at large, and in the grand and lofty teachings of the sacred books which originated with her sons. But, even if this were not open to dispute—which undoubtedly it is—the question would not be affected by it, since the time is called sacred, not for the reason here contended for, but for a totally different one—namely, that it was the subject of especial divine illumination, that the supernatural dwelt in its midst, that miracles were an every-day occurrence, and that, to crown the whole, God himself then and there became incarnate and dwelt in human form.

But not only is that particular epoch in which the fancied revelations were vouchsafed by God to man designated sacred, but, as a result, certain portions of time in our own day are set apart from the rest as being of the same character. We have still among us what are called sacred days and sacred seasons. All Christians agree to call Sunday a sacred day, and large numbers add to this innumerable religious and holy days, these latter extending, as in the case of Lent, over some weeks. In the Church of Rome more than half the year is made up of religious feasts and festivals and days, in which some special saint is honoured, such saint having, in many cases, been far

removed from a wise and honourable man in his lifetime. And the Ritualistic part of the Church of England—a very large portion, by the way, just now—is not a whit better; in fact, if anything, it is a little worse. It has holy days almost without number: days sacred to something, though it is difficult to say what, except it be to pious nonsense. Extreme Protestants will readily agree with these strictures against Popery and its offspring Ritualism; but they will urge that Protestantism has abolished all its holy days, that it pays no regard to saints and ignores religious festivals of all kinds, and that, therefore, it is guiltless in this respect. Such, however, is not the case, for in England it still keeps holy Christmas Day and Good Friday, both, be it observed, Pagan festivals, and having really as little to do with Christ as with Julius Cæsar. In Scotland, where we get the harshest and most unbending form of Protestantism, we have a sort of quintessence of holiness ascribed to Sunday, or, as it is there generally called, “the Sawbeth.” This is a sacred day with a vengeance, when one may not literally speak his own thoughts, unless those thoughts happen to take the form of the popular faith, and to be expressed in the phraseology of cant. The fourth commandment not only ranks with the others, but it has as much weight as all the rest of the Decalogue. There is a good story told of a Scotchman who stole a horse one Saturday night. On the following Monday morning the policeman arrested him very near the spot where the theft had been committed, and, on doing so, he said to him in a friendly way: “Why ever did you stop about here? You had plenty of time to get away.” The thief looked at him in astonishment, and exclaimed: “Well, you have an opinion of me to think that I would travel on the Sawbeth.”

If it is asked, Do we desire to abolish Sunday as a day of rest? the reply is, By no means. We greatly prize the Sunday, but desire to divest it of its alleged sacred character, and thus leave its use—that is, the way it should be spent—to the individual. It should be a day of rest from the fatigue of bodily labour, refreshing to the poor man, and supplying him with the means of re-invigorating his body and informing his mind. Employed thus, the day can be hailed as a boon to mankind. Indeed, to those who choose to devote it to religious purposes there can be no objection to their doing so, only they must not expect to regulate the way in which others are to spend the day, nor by calling it sacred remove it from the usual category of every-day time. “The Sabbath was made for man,” it is said; therefore, whatever sacredness attaches to it must spring from man, and from the use to which he puts it for his own physical, moral, and intellectual good.

CHARLES WATTS.

A.D. 2500.

ANTIPODEAN AGNOSTICISM: ITS WHENCE AND ITS WHITHER.

CHAPTER IV.—MIDWIFERY EXTRAORDINARY.

GREAT, I am sure, would be the surprise of Firkin, my butterman, if, on a Bank Holiday, his eldest hopeful, aged fourteen, should spoil the family excursion by splitting into some twenty pieces—if some of these pieces, quickly assuming the Firkin characteristics, should proceed to condole with grandpapa on the dispersion of his heir, and the rest should congratulate Granny for joy that there had been born into the world a young, thriving, and wholesale family.

And equally great would be the astonishment of this worthy tradesman were he to wake the next morning and find himself Siamese twins, and on the day after a Siamese trio, increasing thus in successive mornings, till, at last, the original butterman became spirally circumvolved past all hope of serving behind his counter, of occupying his deacon's pew, or of receiving his wife's delicate attentions, when he had a cold, in the shape of mustard-plasters.

But what, indeed, Mrs. Firkin's feelings would be upon receiving such an outrage, it is next to impossible to guess. Not, improbably, she might think it her turn to serve at the counter, since Mr. and Master Firkin were taking this very new departure; or the Siamese twin complication would, perhaps, induce her to apply for advice to Sir James Hannen, in order to anticipate possible accusations of bigamy.

Do not fear, gentle reader, and patient as you are gentle; the family, corner-stone as it is of civilisation, is in no danger of being displaced by my biological researches; and we may say at once that these methods of reproduction are utterly unknown to the vertebrate kingdom. In setting out for your inspection what are every-day methods of perpetuation among the smaller fry of Creation, my wish has merely been to shock you out of your stolid, your circumscribed, your "one-horse" system of philosophy before treating of the important, but hitherto somewhat neglected, subject of Church Obstetrics, otherwise Ecclesiogeny.

Is it so? Friend with the wasted cheek and sad eye, must we part?
the large C of thy Catholic so peremptory that thou forgettest that

the biological process of fission or simple division gave us an Eastern as well as a Western Church? Must I ignore that thou thyself arosest like a Phœnix from the ashes of Palestine, that thou hadst a grandfather in Egypt, and a more remote ancestor in India? And may we not see, in the swarm-like busyness of thy numberless microspores, from Congregationalism to that *enfant terrible*, the Salvation Army, an earnest of incipient virility—aye, and it might almost be of potential paternity? Am I never to shake hands with thy first cousin, the Mohammedan, hold converse with those eligible, because affinity-untabled suitors, the Buddhist, the Taoist, and the Confucian? Then must I bid thee a kindly “Good night.” It is long that thou hast occupied the warm seat at the cosy ingle, and perhaps it is time that thou wentest to thy last rest. Not in my hands, thank Heaven, are the issues of life and death.

Australia seemed in a fair way to owe her new church to a process of gemmation. Gemmation is the process which gave three husbands to Mrs. Firkin. But it may be more conveniently witnessed in some species of yeast. Imagine a microscopically little round or oval speck, which, bathed in a nourishing ocean, developes a little knob: the knob grows—at last cuts adrift, and starts life on its own account. And it sometimes happens that the knobs may grow so rapidly that a tiny microscopic necklace is formed.

And all this time, mind you, while the growth is strong, the little plants have not time to think of kissing and flirting and nonsense. But when they do kiss, they give up growing in chains, but just break up into a large number of spores, which for some time are kept close together by a jelly. Professors of history traced with much interest what happened to the jelly of Anglican Imperialism when Catholicism and Buddhism and Mohammedanism and the rest, including Judaism, began ardently to make love to one another upon more or less equal terms.

Certainly the process looked like gemmation when, in early Antipodean days, the first Bishop Worry was sent across the sea. But it proved a false start. The little knob, though it swelled a bit, never cast adrift, as healthy Churches and children should, and the third bishop, Bishop Plato, did not help the new growth to maturity.

When Squatterson entered the boudoir and found, or seemed to find, the wife of his bosom depreciating him to the enemy of his country, the furnace of his wrath was made seven degrees hotter. At first he said little; but first and last he thought a good deal. He contented himself with silently and firmly negating all political proceedings which he suspected to have been episcopally originated. But the Bishop couldn't be kept out of the domestic conversation altogether. The episcopal reputation was like water, which persists in finding its own level, and finds it, at some sacrifice of elevation, by means of all sorts of

chinks and crannies. Or one might compare it to the frogs of Egypt, which, cold and uncanny, intruded into ovens, kneading troughs, and even into more unsuitable places. Lady Boadicea had a strange notion that loyalty to her friend made it necessary that she should try, in season and out of season, to nag him into favour; and Mrs. Tristram Shandy herself was not more inopportune.

Nor was the Bishop much more popular outside than inside the President's quarters. Canterbury, on the loss of its temporal possessions, had followed the suit of the Vatican, and required Augustine's pence from the remotest parts of its spiritual dominions. Again, a great scandal had lately been caused in England by the discovery of certain "Decretals." A worthy vicar, burning with zeal to do something "for the glory of God and the promotion of his Church on earth"—*i.e.*, in England—had put together an uninterrupted and successive series of letters from Archbishops of Canterbury, from Abbots of Iona and of Lindisfarne, had eked them out with Druidical traditions and with investigations into the worshippers of Thor or Woden, who must be held to have seen "through a glass darkly." Those letters were recognised by the authorities to be a vast improvement, and to rid them of pre-Reformation complications by proving satisfactorily, to those who had made the necessary *sacrificio dell' intelletto*, that Canterbury, and not Rome, had from the earliest ages been the true centre of Christianity.

But when the Bishop of Sydney, under direct orders from Canterbury, attempted to force the new dogma of the decretals on his clergy, dissension ensued, and an incipient sect or two began to make play. The Salvation Navy was a great success while the wind blew fair. Sydney has a magnificent harbour, with islands and bays, intercepted with promontories and thickly-clad hills, with quiet nooks for those who wish to repose, and strong currents for those who like to wrestle. Certainly it was a stroke of genius on the part of the Admiral to proclaim this a Harbour of Refuge from the outside storms of sin—a haven in which weary milliners might bask and lounge, in which shop assistants during the live-long Sunday might spiritually invigorate their flaccid muscles and bronze their pasty faces with the sun of Righteousness. The whole Office- and Counter-craft of the city joined the new movement. There were Jordan pic-nics and Hallelujah bathing, while "miserable cast-a-ways" drifted away on rafts covered with cushions, protected by awnings, with wells accommodating every variety of drink, but not constructed to hold a chaperon. The Admiral, however, never became the founder of any permanent religion, nor was this movement the motive to the yet far distant Australian Agnosticism. To instance but one difficulty, the zeal of the worshippers was affected by the seasons of the year, and a merely fair-weather religion clearly wants an important

note of catholicism. Then they carried their metaphors to the point of absurdity, for the Admiral himself was unable to set at rest the great controversy which arose on the subject of granny knots, a phrase not confining itself to the world of hemp, but extending itself into social matters. The common idea had been that a "granny knot" was reprehensible for coming undone too easily; but in the persuasion of the new school a granny knot exhibited its senile folly by jamming, and refusing to undo when any one person desired that it should. In the seafaring universe they were of course right; but the social application promised all sorts of horrors, and the good sense of the community had no ears for the parable.

"Whether we keep them free from rats or from mice,
If we've promised them aught, let us keep our promise,"

began to be a favourite quotation, though the promise was concerned more perhaps with the presence than the absence of small deer.

But Squatterson, from weariness of the Boadicean obstinacy, and in sheer antagonism to the Bishop, took the wrong side. He even went so far as to preach a Gordian crusade against knots that jammed. His own divorce inevitably was the result, and was perhaps unconsciously facilitated by the fact that the appointment of judges rested with himself as President.

Lady Boadicea then was dethroned, and with her fall the Anglican Church suffered from a severe depression. Over her sad fate we may well drop a tear, provided that we remember that all sorts of painful and inconceivable penalties attend the path of man or woman who cherishes prejudices belonging to another clime and to another age, who forgets honestly and practically to answer the ever-important question, "Who is my neighbour?"

It was about this time that a few drops ran together into a trickle, which in another 400 years was seen to flow along like a huge Mississippi, that recked nought of coming oceans, in which the freshness and the geological character of the flow would ultimately have to lose itself. Still less did the drops foresee the next process, where the invisible vaporisation of their particles might well excuse the notion of the non-perpetuity of earnest intention. The first thunderstorm removed all doubts on this head. The trickle began with the meeting of a few friends to commemorate the death of Josiah Crimes. This energetic soul did not live very long in the land of his adoption; but he made his mark before he wore himself out. Though originally imported by Melbourne, he found himself unable to confine his attention to that Colony, but wandered all over the huge island teaching truths which he had, no doubt, originally derived from science and reading, but which

had become instinctive with him. He stirred up hearts and heads to reject husky ritual, from which the rich kernel had long since been taken and eaten. He urged them to repose their weary limbs on home-made furniture, however homely, rather than on the worm-eaten stools of mediævalism. Everywhere welcome, everywhere pleasantly stimulating to honesty, to work, to content, and to Antipodean fraternity, a fixed home became scarcely necessary to him, and he would often pleasantly complain that he had nowhere to lay his head. Many of his sayings have been treasured up with more or less inaccuracy by the Boswells of that time. "I don't come here to make you gloomy," he would say; "I come to help you to lay hold of that which is dear to all of you, *life*; and that you should have more, not less of it." "Don't lay too much stress on your Christianity," he would repeat ever and anon. "I can assure you the unknown forces of the universe are able to ring in a new Christ out of the inorganic refuse of your copper mines." And when they represented to him the historic grandeur of Anglican articles, and of creeds confessedly not written by St. Athanasius, it is certain that he petulantly exclaimed: "My dear fellow, it would take me but three minutes to dictate to a shorthand writer a dozen such."

W. GREATHEED.

(To be concluded.)

AGNOSTICISM BRIEFLY REVIEWED.

AGNOSTICISM is destined to occupy a permanent and important position in the world of thought. With the reflective it has great significance, and upon the unreflective a greater claim than their want of penetration can discover. The ranks of Agnosticism are much more extended than would appear to be the case upon a first glance. Those only who have avowed their attachment to this mode of thought have been enrolled; whereas the whole thinking human family must be gathered under its banner. It is not a matter of volition or assent. We are ignorant of all the greatest problems of existence, not because we desire to be, but because they are beyond the solving power of the human mind. This incapacity is an infirmity common to all: how, then, can we escape from this inevitable, overshadowing ignorance? An open acknowledgment of this fact is not to be expected until candour and truthfulness

take the place of craft and hypocrisy, which at present are more than sufficient to retard the advance of truth.

So concise and pointed is the principle of Agnosticism that it will hardly admit of enlargement; and to attempt such enlargement is rather to weaken than to strengthen its position. There is a certain finality in the principle which bars any advance. To dwell on it constantly, however, is advisable, that those who have not considered it may have their attention arrested; but to dilute the plain and simple facts by mixing with it anything irrelevant is to destroy its efficacy.

Many complain that Agnosticism brings inquiry to a deadlock. The reasonableness of such complaint must be obvious to any one who feels a keen pleasure when difficulties are permanently removed, and a freer course opened to investigation.

Agnosticism does not curtail the scope or restrict the efforts of those who are proud of performing prodigies of mental walking. They will, however, have to confine themselves to a measured course, for Agnosticism does not admit of the illimitable. The mental athlete may go this course as many times as he choose, which will answer any purpose he may desire, and be more satisfactory to those who wish to test his achievement; for they will have a better assurance of what he has done than they would if the course had not been surveyed. With this arrangement the thinking machinery need not rust from want of use.

Agnosticism does not contemplate anything so insane as closing up any of the thousand and one beautiful walks that reticulate our own mental globe; but it does suggest the absurdity of wandering in any of the paths that may intersect the moon: the possible, of course, is allowed, and nothing but the impossible objected to. Those who enjoy the lunar privileges are the Gnostics; those who consider it safe only in those paths that are familiar to mankind are Agnostics.

The anti-religious movement of the present period must incite the clergy and their following to an active opposition. With no other purpose in view than the preservation of their priestly order, they are sure to fight with dogged obstinacy. In times past they have had to encounter the Atheist, and have succeeded pretty well in keeping him at bay, if not by the keen edge of truth, by the not less destructive means of contempt and obloquy. This opponent, I must confess, merited his fate; for he was in the habit of strutting, in his vulgar fashion, before the religious world more as a Guy Fawkes than anything else, and in an attitude of defiance, desiring rather to strike terror than to carry conviction. Much Atheism of the past (and, perhaps, some of the present) was professed by individuals whose disbelief in a Deity was in strict accord with the rest of their character. They objected to a God because their wild and uncontrollable natures could not submit to

restraint in any form ; but, formidable as these Atheists appeared, to overcome them was an easy matter. Their mode was repulsive, and their position unsupported by reason.

Of late an important and beneficial change has taken place in the advocacy of advanced thought, and from this marked improvement the anti-theological party are bound to reap an immense and lasting advantage. It is to be hoped, however, that those who still profess themselves Atheists may eventually cool and settle down into their proper orbits and run an established course as luminaries to the Agnostic world. Extremes are dangerous, and are fraught with peril. Supernaturalism or Theism occupies one extreme, Atheism the other. In neither case is there a fulcrum, though the lever and power may be at hand. Atheism encumbers the mind with more than it is able to carry ; it accepts a load just at that point when it should be free. If we know nothing of what may be beyond phenomena, it is evident the Atheist wanders into a *terra incognita*. But amid the confusion—the Supernaturalist on the one hand, and the Atheist on the other—some have the satisfaction of enjoying that calm and equilibrium which Agnosticism gives.

The fever of Supernaturalism past, and a permanent recovery from the revulsion attained, the mind finds itself, on that point, on the balance where there is no rising or falling—where the mind is content to acknowledge itself incompetent to grapple with many problems that the moralist and philosopher have from all time struggled to master. This undoubtedly is a neutral spot, where antagonists must put up their swords and end all differences. Agnosticism is a rock which affords a firm foothold and a resting-place, such as is not to be found elsewhere in the whole range of intellectual activity. It stands out boldly and clearly defined, dominating on all sides an illimitable abyss ; and those who hitherto have sought to measure in this measureless and grasp in this limitless, and have found this rock in their distress, will accept it as a rest from much useless and fruitless labour. Although this rock promises rest, it will, by no means, be the inactivity of the "Sleepy-Hollow." Here men will gauge their own capacities and compass all things admitted by such decision. Vain, ambitious desires will not lead them to attempt the impossible. Here they will beget a modesty unknown to them before. Conscious of being finite, they will not aspire to the infinite. If not a veritable Utopia, the vile asperities that characterise religious controversies will be unknown. The converts from wild wanderings in orthodoxy will here meet the converts from equally wild wanderings in heterodoxy. The scales having fallen from their eyes, they will travel over the old battle-fields without a difference. The sting of antagonism taken out, they will pass their lives in tranquillity.

The Bible will be preserved by them in their museum among other curiosities. They may, peradventure, regard it as some marvellous chrysalis, fated, in ages to come, to burst into life and significance.

Made bold by their modesty, they will allow all things to be possible, though suspecting some to be improbable. Flights of the imagination will, by no means, be discouraged by the consistent dwellers on this rock of Agnosticism ; but such efforts will never be admitted into their system of philosophy. Fictions that may be created *apropos* of life and its object, the origin of human existence and its termination, the great first cause, etc., will be indulged in for the delectation of those who cannot find sufficient scope for their bounding and elastic minds in matters appertaining to this life. But no more importance will be attached to such day-dreams than would be to the mental excursions of children when they see some good fairy overloading them with instantaneous riches, changing their hut to a palace and their rags to silks. These are pleasant and excusable wanderings with beings of so strange a destiny as ours. The aspirations of these dwellers on the rock will be unbounded : their being will almost burst with a sense of the sublime ; but they will not dare, as it were, to chalk on the walls what they feel concerning the infinite. Here the devotee will be found, as the sun is shedding its first rays, drinking in his fill, but more as a child than when his eyes were first blessed by its glorious light. He is now conscious of his childhood and acknowledges it. "Whence art thou, great light, and whither?" he will cry. "Oh, what am I in thy presence?" These and the like are his psalms. Bigotry is purged from his soul, and dogma is his abomination. Agnostics, not ashamed to write "Ignotus" upon these great problems, are the only folk who can truly worship. They of a truth become as little babes, not having learnt the alphabet of the Unknowable. Their literature will never have to acknowledge a Foxe's "Book of Martyrs," or have to disclose the horrors of an Inquisition. Toleration, which is born of humility, and humility of a proper sense of the universe, is theirs.

No greater mistake can be made than to assume that Agnosticism is synonymous with irreligion. The Agnostic has his holy of holies, where the vulgar know-alls are not permitted to enter. There is his altar with its inextinguishable lamp, and there is the abode of his profound mysteries. And, as he prostrates himself before its impenetrable veil, sounds of sweet harmony greet his ears, and he, in the charm of such ennobling music, feels ample compensation for being held in ignorance. He stands on the boundless ocean of all things, his mind lifted up beyond description, while he contemplates a vastness that cannot accommodate itself to thought.

AMATOR VERITATIS.

AGNOSTICISM AND EDUCATION.

THE inevitable effect of a prevalent Agnosticism must be a new and higher culture. As long as, in the language of the old hymn, the chief end of life is—

“An everlasting soul to save
And fit it for the skies,”

heaven and its attainment becomes the be-all and the end-all, and earth necessarily has to be regarded as a mere preparation, a vale of tears, a slough of despond, through which man, as a pilgrim and stranger, must wearisomely pass on his way to a would-be mansion in the skies.

But as “knowledge grows from more to more,” as it is discovered that this wondrous world of ours is no longer a flat expanse with a local heaven above it and a local hell below (to one or the other of which we are fated according to our good or evil deeds), all who are free of thought and strong of heart naturally turn to the affairs of time to forge here, if possible, the olden-fancied Eden which has faded into the emptiness of space. To this end education is essential; an education not alone of the intellect, but an all-sided education; an education that will create a sound mind in a sound body, a complete and all-sided man. Thus, by the concentration upon culture of all the forces that have hitherto been wasted upon “air, thin air,” we may hope to see emergent ere long a race of true men and true women; a race who, taking all that any cult has bequeathed in the way of physical, mental, or moral development, will gladly receive these as the most precious legacies of the past, and transmit them improved and brightened for the future.

To educate our children into a sense of the vast continuity of the race, of their dependence upon it, and consequent obligation, is to present a new basis of culture, character, and hope. The first effect of Agnosticism on education may be adverse. The deduction may be drawn, “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die;” but, in the long run, this will not be so. In the motherhood of Earth a new sense of brotherhood will arise, and men will be moved to a higher resolve, a nobler self-devotion, and more daring courage. Hopelessness of the old must precede hope for the new.

COURTLANDT PALMER.

NOTES AND SCRAPS.

WE respectfully direct the attention of our readers to the circular re the AGNOSTIC PRESS FUND enclosed in the present issue of our magazine. The work we have undertaken is a large and important one, and the extent of our labours will be materially determined by the response of our friends. We have reason to know that the AGNOSTIC is cordially approved by liberal thinkers, and we are confident that the projected literary campaign will not only considerably strengthen our movement, but will also give a marked impetus to the cause of mental and moral reform generally. We hope to be able to announce next month a large subscription list. No subscriber's name will be published without his consent.

Mr. F. Sydney Morris delivered two discourses at South Place Institute last month, to increasingly large congregations. His treatment of his first discourse, "The Tyranny of the Dead," was very happy and exceedingly thoughtful. Mr. Morris is a powerful and effective speaker, and is deservedly popular, not only in York, his ministerial headquarters, but in every town where his varied abilities are known. Agnosticism has few more able and cultured advocates than Mr. Morris.

Instinctively we revolt from the suggestion of "hedging" in the matter of religious belief. A Transatlantic divine advised his hearers to indulge the hope of a future life upon the chance of its truth. If fallacious, they would never know it; their dreamless sleep would never be broken. And some seek to persuade us, in the same way, that, if we will only consent to dower the Unknowable with a set of anthropomorphic attributes, we may so closely approach the ideal of the Christian Deity as, perchance, to "inherit the promises," should these, after all, be fulfilled. We will not thus "lay to win," in any event; the slang phrase suits best the base idea. When we left our old faith, counting, as we did, its terrors to be vain, we that moment relinquished our claim and our right to its rewards.

It is objected that, in ultimate recess, no conclusion is warranted to the effect that the Unknowable exists in *unity*, either as underlying noumenon, primal cause, or "I am" of existence. Logically, we are informed, an infinity of causes, noumena, a legion of creative powers, are as reasonable as one absolute. Possibly. We do not dogmatise; let the number pass. Is it not remarkable, however, that a numerical hypothesis should thus be projected over the rim and verge of darkness by those who pretend great modesty in their approach to unknown

regions? Two and two, here and now, pass for, and are taken for granted to be, four; elsewhere the sum may be less or more. But have we any warrant for dividing or multiplying the Unconditioned, or for the imposition of plurality thereupon?

A veritable "turnip lantern," wherewith to frighten juveniles, is the term "unthinkable." It is employed to scare the young Agnostic from his reserve-conviction of the Unknowable. He is told that it is highly improper to speak—and, of course, much more so to think—of the "unthinkable;" the consequences of such conduct might be very serious. Yet we, who are familiar with such verbal scares, are of the opinion that that which is, to us, unknowable may very possibly precede and survive our thinking of it, being utterly independent thereof. Non-existence and being unthinkable are two different things. We hear much of "thinks;" but what of "unthinks" (quite different from nothings)? What of that which no man hath seen, nor can see, nor, rightly, think of at all, even to deny?

The remarkable and unqualified success which has attended Mr. Charles Watts's third tour in the United States and Canada must be peculiarly gratifying to advocates of a cultured and reverent Agnosticism. Since September last, when Mr. Watts arrived in America, he has been lecturing almost every night, to crowded and enthusiastic audiences, winning the respect if not the assent of the theological as well as the anti-theological public. There can be no doubt that Mr. Watts is conducting an eminently useful propaganda, and he has the heartiest well-wishes of his many English friends in his arduous and courageous work.

Pessimism is a sorry mistake, Optimism a venial error, Materialism a sin in every way unto death.

The following books and pamphlets have reached us for review or notice:—

George Eliot's Life, as Related in her Letters and Journals. Arranged and edited by her Husband, J. W. Cross. Three volumes. (Blackwood & Sons.)

Philosophy and Faith: A Plea for Agnostic Belief. By James M. Hodgson, D.Sc., B.D., M.A. (Manchester: Brook & Chrystal.)

Can the Old Faith Live with the New? or, The Problem of Evolution and Revelation. By the Rev. George Matheson, M.A., D.D. (Blackwood & Sons.)

Intellectual Progress in Europe. By H. J. Hardwicke, M.D. (Sheffield: Published by the Author.)

Sympneumata, or Evolutionary Forces now Active in Man. Edited by Laurence Oliphant. (Blackwood & Sons.)

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"Agnosticism simply means that a man shall not say he knows or believes that which he has no scientific grounds for professing to know or believe.....Agnosticism says that we know nothing of what may be beyond phenomena."—PROF. HUXLEY.

"I think that generally (and more and more as I grow older), but not always, an Agnostic would be the more correct description of my state of mind."—CHARLES DARWIN.

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THE AGNOSTIC.

MAY, 1885.

THE OTHER SIDE OF AGNOSTICISM.

IN some former papers* it was attempted to set forth the justification and the practical result of Agnosticism. It was then pointed out that Agnosticism is the relief, the necessary reserve, of secular duty and secular life, and that any separation of the two, as a division of the warp and woof of the life-web, ought not to be theoretically attempted, being in practice virtually impossible. Still, with this preface, it cannot, on the other hand, be denied that Secular work, by itself, when wholly innocent of any Agnostic complement, is (being practical Materialism) a very different thing from our view of it, as, for a moment, we try to isolate it and to examine what our life-work, as Agnostics, is apart from our Agnosticism. And it is, perhaps, allowable to indicate what our particular Secularism, pure and simple, is; although, step by step, as we proceed, difficulties will gather round the solitary definition.

Work, daily life-work, by itself, is a gospel which cannot well afford to maintain, at its own charges, a preacher of righteousness. Even could it do so, the post in question would be well-nigh a sinecure. It is wasted effort continually to be upholding the dignity, the necessity, of daily toil: as well might one prate of the dignity, the necessity, of breathing. For no other purpose could mankind have been born into a wholly material dwelling-place than to make the best use of, and, as it were, to be at home in it. All life-work, as a rule, makes towards that end, and the worker is content when his aim is accomplished. The fitting epitaph for one who thus materially believes is, "Life's task well done, now comes rest." Nothing could be simpler—nothing, in our view, more prosaic; and, that being the case, there is no need to say more in regard to it. It is only when recognising—for some reason or other, it matters not what—that there is more before us than the forge

* "The Confession of Agnosticism" (Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4 of this Magazine).

and workshop of life, something more than the tools of servile labour, the wages at the day's end, and the couch for sleep at night—only then that some real interest begins to attach itself to these matters and to the duty required of us in connection with them. It is only as men begin to realise themselves to be something more than day-labourers, with brain or hand, that any eloquent lesson is to be found bound up with their lives. Such added interest may come from different quarters; it is only essential, in our view, that it come from a non-Materialistic one.

Christian teaching has shown a fine discrimination in the treatment of this subject, so full of delicate shades of meaning in its maxims as to have gained—that highest meed of praise—the distinction of being termed “contradictory” by the unthinking. It has, in the same breath, condemned such absorption in the performance of Secular work as may result in complete engrossment therein, to the contempt of other matters; and it has also counselled such passion of energy as we can command for the performance of the task in the daylight before the approach of the unworking night. Agnostic maxims may draw at first sight even closer to apparent contradiction. Our counsel, to confine such faculties as are appropriate to the discharge of daily routine solely to that province, may seem one at issue with our former contention, that we ourselves are twofold, as is the world we dwell in. Let us see how our theory will work in two or three examples.

An employment purely physical, and pursued for bare maintenance, is inconsistent, upon the face of it, with any exalted flight into the upper air of thought-life—at least, during the hours of labour. The workman who lounges over his task of road-making will not excuse himself to his employer at the day's end by pleading research into the unknowable substratum. His energies are needed in a different field (that of physical effort), and he is so constituted, by education and upbringing, as to render his work, in that direction, all that he can fitly perform. Any higher faculties he may possess have not been awakened, and are practically dormant. Still, if he does the work before him well, all that can be expected has been achieved. “He is in his duty; be out of it who may.” Any hint of the higher touches him lightly. He is as we have made him. Possibly he would not have been so patient a worker in the labour field had it not been ingeniously suggested to him that his reward is “to come,” and that his best course at present is to be as busy as possible. It is easy, nothing is easier, than to make a jest of this self and slave of toil, and to say: “What part or lot has he, or such as he, in any mystical universe underneath the actual? What matters the Unknowable to him? Will you speak to him of the ‘over-soul,’ or hint to him that this rounded world is, after all, a double sphere, ‘nine times folded in mystery’?” We admit it to be useless, although we question

whether the refinements of the Trinitarian hypothesis (without a sure knowledge of which, it is said, he is likely to be awkwardly placed) are any more intelligible to him. Christianity, in truth, only fools the man : we are satisfied with his secular work ; decline to present him with our theory of Agnosticism, and so leave him, although we confess that his condition and his weary lot make us sad at heart.

We leave this instance, and seek for others less extreme, and therefore more fitted for examination.

As we ascend in the scale of social comfort we find an attention and a devotion paid more or less exclusively to the work of the day and hour. The higher also that we rise in the thought-life of the many, we discover, from various causes, an increased degree of solicitude expressed for that which will, in any way, serve as a relief from the tedium of life's routine. Reaching, at last, the highest type of all, the mind given to reflection, the life of leisure thought, the amenities of intellectual converse, we find this persistent craving for "relief" defeat itself by its own anxiety. Profound, at times, the dissatisfaction of philosopher, theologian, politician, with his own favourite theory ! And yet the work of the hour goes on ; the mill-wheel round, of life and living, must be followed. Only, when the day is done, every required social evolution drearily performed, so much attempted, something less actually accomplished, how profound the weariness ! That this weariness, this craving, is never wholly dominant in persons of balanced temperament, but only succeeds in asserting itself at intervals, shows that it is the supplement of, not the substitute for, daily work. Being evanescent, it never succeeds in effecting a supremacy : it follows work as physical weariness does ; but, like the latter, it passes away, and does not indispose us for returning to toil again. Its most remarkable characteristic is that it increases in proportion to the calibre of the intellect : the higher the thought, the more the pain ; the deeper the research, the more intense the craving. The lower-middle classes in this country, those sufficiently possessed of educational advantages to experience the *sub-dissatisfaction* of life, are, at the same time, those in whom the feeling of *sub-dissatisfaction* is most readily and easily allayed, or, at least, deadened, by a resort to theological opiates. A deeper unrest, even when the life-work has been fittingly performed, pervades the mood of the higher intellects, more especially apparent when there is sufficient frankness to unveil it to the public gaze. "The higher the harder," because, again, the cheap consolations of the popular religionism are so transparently ineffectual, and, therefore, are not resorted to. In reality, pathetic is the attempt made by some cultivated minds to relieve this weary craving with something proportioned, in their own idea, to the inner need experienced. Sublime desire is sought, and rightly, to be gratified with that which is

sublime ; but research, however painful, in the region of the actual alone never reaches sublimity in the true sense ; the recesses of the starry skies, the measurements of the Milky Way, are not more sublime than the dimensions of a garden plot. Inquiries into the inconceivably vast, the inconceivably minute, cannot fill the void of heart so sorrowful in its hopeless need.

Life, however, even in its realism, is not all work ; there is leisure, repose, reflection, the pastime, and the play. There is attachment, affection, love, with all the delights and endearments of our lot. There is not a circumstance, not a characteristic, of human life, of which the Religionism of the past has not taken the advantage, used for her own purposes, and in many cases defaced and travestied as well. Of the inevitable reaction alike of effort, aspiration, and delight, Religionism has made use for the purpose of impressing us with the vanity of earthly pleasure. Of every flagging power, every throbbing pulse, every passion ending in satiety, she has made a mockery, and has tantalised the soul-thirst of every one of us in turn with the sight of her own broken and empty cistern. In the cup of earthly joy—it is full to overflowing—one draught repays a thousand pains, an hour of its ecstasy worth all the pangs of fear and death—there is no poison ; but it is not inexhaustible, and a continuous partaking of it defeats its purpose.

And it is the same with the delights to be found in Nature's fairest face : because they change and pass, a tyrannous superstition insists that they are wholly delusive. Delusion of delusions ! For, although it is not all that could be wished, even our beauteous world, this is because we seek too much from its smile. The darkness falls too suddenly upon the fairy scene ; a chill wind blows shiveringly from the ocean of Death ; the dreary rain-cloud blurs the opal and amethyst of the dying west. May-blossom, harebell, and heather-bloom wither at last, and the dew-drop dries within its violet cup. Therefore, some have rashly sworn by Death as the only verity !

For ourselves, we will not act thus like petted children by our Mother Earth. Balm for every sorrow may not be hers ; but she has comfort for a thousand forms of weariness nevertheless. Religionism has never thus distinguished between palliative and specific. No chalice will drown all care ; but it will cheer and console us, this cup of Nature, when it does not wholly heal. Some pangs are incurable ; some heart-sickness there is, and ever shall be, for which nothing availeth. But we do not therefore repine, for, though all unsatisfied longing tendeth to pain, we accept the thirst remaining after the satisfaction-cup of earth's joy is quaffed, and say : This is meet and right. All cannot be ours, although much is. We cannot know all. To do so might be added pain. It works, this dissatisfaction we yet experience,

this unconquered and unconquerable yearning, this sad weariness we own, even at our best, for some end not understood. It is better so. What we have is good. Let us be content.

It is plain that in this our behaviour the error of extremes is avoided. Secular work, and its revulsion of sub-dissatisfaction, weariness, and craving, are preserved in their proper places. Neither the one nor the other is shunned, nor unduly pushed into prominence. To seek for everything (the highest good as well as the lower) in our daily task will disappoint; for work, play, and rest make not up life's sum. To abandon that which our hand findeth to do, in a fond chase after the elusive, disappoints still more bitterly; for neither does that which is unknown fill up the perfect round. But, when known and unknown are accepted together, then work, which has its reason, its explanation, within itself, is not without sufficient fruits; and the subsequent yearning for something more, as it is presently inexplicable—exists solely in virtue of being inexplicable—does not weaken or destroy the effect of that which it succeeds, and, having doubtless a purpose of its own, by us not understood, is left as the undetermined quantity in life's equation—indispensable thereto. As we have elsewhere pointed out, it is impossible to distinguish the relation borne by this unknown element towards the known. Were this ascertained, a step would be made towards the knowledge of the unknowable. Elimination of the unknown being thus impossible, the compound of known and unknown remains in some sort a mystery. Everything may not be clear; gaps have appeared, and always will appear, within the province of the known, which can only be provisionally accounted for by tacit reference to the unknown. Nothing, in this way, is unfinished, abortive, or contradictory in the plan and purpose of life: an infinite store of reconciliation lies beyond and around. Nothing we know of is incomplete—because so much of the rounded orb is out of sight. Nothing is vain—because our thoughts of the sum must be vainer still. Nothing “walks with aimless feet”—because the goal is hidden.

Here is refuge indeed, and here is safety, if from nothing more than the destroying blight of Pessimistic questioning. That query of the “worthiness of life” is a fair one, certain circumstances granted. Life will assuredly be estimable—capable of being weighed in the hair-scales of human judgment until it be seen which way the balance of advantage turns—when the *whole* of life is capable of being thus weighed. But it were folly to pronounce the verdict, “Found wanting,” when the conditions of an exhaustive test cannot be fulfilled.

It is at this point, also, that we effectually part company with a Materialistic Utilitarianism. To make this latter creed a tolerable one, everything must be, not working for the best, but the best possible, now.

If in the present there be anything lacking to ensure complete happiness (supposing happiness the highest good), then, undoubtedly, existence is a mistake. Nothing further is to come, and as unquestionably nothing else is here now. The arrangements of existence are defective—a singularly awkward state of matters, as there remains nothing to be employed, or invoked, to set them right. Everything is known, and nothing can avail. There is no reserve upon which to draw either for explanation or for remedy. Only, in a thousand years or so less or more, there may be a change for the better, since in that direction the tide seems to be setting! There is nothing sadder than this deferred hope of a better future, which sickens many a strong heart. All wrongs are to be righted, and the rough places made plain “far off, in summers that we shall not see.” It is another proof that minds fostered in the hope of divine promises, and disappointed, cling childishly to the vainest expectations instead—delude themselves with the mockery of a mockery—dilute immortality in the heavens to immortality in human remembrance, and even indulge in the phrases of a forsaken hope, as if the very words had power to bring back the hope itself and make it live again.

Strength of soul, patience, fortitude, need no poor shifts like these to nerve for the conflict of life. Duty has its own plain path, which serves for our guidance: although the ending of that way is hidden, its direction, here and now, is unmistakable. Exalted, heroic motive need not exist; ecstasy would be misplaced, and reward, or compensation, elsewhere or anywhere, should be despised, in the toil itself of life. It is a libel on human nature to say that it will not work with its might unless spurred by selfish need or bribed to effort by the hope of a reward. There is, after all, something that slips between the imperious rule of necessity, compelling men to labour, and their loose choice, biassed by fear or hope, which seems to decide the matter. Duty is duty, at once laid upon us and elected by us. *To do* is meet and right, not alone because it is binding, not alone because it is pleasurable, but because—all we can say is, we are constrained to have it done.

Our duty calls to work in the day-time of the actual, not unmindful either of the long and moonless night which to every one of us will surely come in its season, or of that still deeper shade of mystery—the atmospheric pressure of the unknown which garments us unfelt, enveloping all that is. These twin mysteries will meet in one when, to us, the actual perishes. In the meanwhile, that in which we are now employed is, to us, a matter of fact and sense. We are together with it; let us, in the present, act our part therein, and thus possess, at the last, the satisfaction of a life work completed and sealed.

G. M. McC.

HERBERT SPENCER'S PHILOSOPHY: AN EXPOSITION.

V.

"FIRST PRINCIPLES."

AGNOSTICISM: OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

ALL who have followed this Exposition thus far have seen how peacefully, how gracefully, and how naturally Religion and Science blend. Religion and Science are not only not foes, but they are the very closest of friends. Their friendship is so intimate that the one cannot live apart from the other. Together they flourish; together they fade. With a common origin and a common object, their interests are inseparable, and they work in perfect harmony. Let those who can proclaim that there is everlasting war between Religion and Science, and then reconcile their proclamation with the unity of Nature. The Synthetic System admits no such radical vice in the constitution of things.

This coalescence of Religion and Science forms the basis of the Agnostic Philosophy. Advisedly we say *Agnostic Philosophy*, for Agnosticism *is* a philosophy. It is not, as some imagine, a religion; nor is it, as others suppose, a science. While it cordially accepts both, it does not come within the definition of either. Religion always has some theory of original causation; but, upon analysis, Agnosticism declares all theories to be equally unthinkable, equally absurd, and, therefore, equally worthless. Science always has some positive knowledge of the order existing among phenomena; but, upon incontestable evidence, Agnosticism asserts the existence of something beyond phenomena. Hence, though neither Religion *alone* nor Science *alone* constitutes Agnosticism, yet the *blending* of the two produces the third. Just as in the animal-world, or in the plant-world, the union of two species gives birth to a new variety, so in the thought-world the union of Religion and Science gives birth to a new Philosophy.

Undoubtedly there are many to whom Agnosticism seems a vague,

a shadowy, an unsatisfactory system. The Theist,* the Atheist, the Pantheist, the Deist,* the Positivist—each of these will have some objection to urge.

The Theist may say : Agnosticism makes us mental paupers, and is, therefore, a cruel Philosophy. In place of an intelligent, a sympathetic Being, towards whom we could entertain definite feelings, you give us an unintelligent, an unsympathetic Unknowable, to which we can ascribe no emotion whatever. Instead of a personal God, you give us an unthinkable abstraction, and so rob us at once of our faith and of our consolation. Thus Agnosticism is cruel.

Now, we are not about to laugh down this objection, for it is a very natural one. The God-idea, underlying as it does every other idea, cannot, without pain, be cast aside by those who have so long clung to it. Precisely as in the political world, or in the social world, no justifiable revolution can do its work without that tearing of body and of mind which causes a breaking and a broadening of the constitution ; so no thought-revolution can be accomplished without mental laceration, and no evolution of a higher conception from a lower one can be accomplished without painful friction. Man's belief in a God akin to himself has always been a source of pleasure to man, and he has never accepted without a vehement protest those successively less man-like notions of the Ultimate Cause which developing knowledge has thrust upon him. "Doubtless, in all times and places, it has consoled the barbarian to think of his deities as so exactly like himself in nature that they could be bribed with offerings of food ; and the assurance that deities could not be so propitiated must have been repugnant, because it deprived him of an easy method of obtaining supernatural protection. To the Greeks it was manifestly a source of comfort that, on occasions of difficulty, they could obtain, through oracles, the advice of their gods—nay, might even get the personal aid of their gods in battle ; and it was probably a very genuine anger which they visited upon philosophers who called in question these gross ideas of their

* Etymologically, *Theism* and *Deism* are synonyms, since the Greek *Θεός* and the Latin *Deus* are identical in meaning with the Anglo-Saxon *God*. But, in becoming Anglicised, the Greek root and the Latin root have undergone a slight, though not an unimportant, differentiation ; and scholars now make a distinction between the two words—a distinction which is as nice as it is useful. The Deist is a believer in a personal God, and *nothing more*. The Theist is a believer in a personal God, and may be a believer in *something more*. The Deist rejects Christianity and Revelation ; but the Theist may accept both. Thus Thomas Paine was a Deist, while the Archbishop of Canterbury is a Theist. The former term is exclusive and the latter inclusive. Theist is correlative (being the opposite of Atheist) ; but Deist is not correlative.

mythology. A religion which teaches the Hindoo that it is impossible to purchase eternal happiness by placing himself under the wheel of Juggernaut can scarcely fail to seem a cruel one to him, since it deprives him of the pleasurable consciousness that he can at will exchange miseries for joys. Nor is it less clear that to our Catholic ancestors the beliefs that crimes could be compounded for by the building of churches, that their own punishments and those of their relatives could be abridged by the saying of masses, and that Divine aid or forgiveness might be obtained through the intercession of saints, were highly solacing ones; and that Protestantism, in substituting the conception of God so comparatively unlike ourselves as not to be influenced by such methods, must have appeared to them hard and cold." It is but natural, then, that a further step in the same direction should be arrested by a similar resistance from the Theist's outraged feelings.

The reason for this wounding of Theistic sentiment is made manifest when we remember that, during each stage of thought-evolution, the Theist, like the Atheist, must think in such terms as he possesses. Here is a Theist. His conception of cause having always been embodied in the lower or concrete form, he is unable to conceive of cause in the higher or abstract form. Take away his concrete conception, and he is left without any conception whatever, since his intelligence has not arrived at that stage of development at which he can realise in thought the abstract conception. As long as all the remarkable changes of which he can see the beginning or the end are brought about by men, he is unable to represent in thought any consequences that are brought about by less-general and less-concrete antecedents. Thus it is that the Theist, in common with the barbarian, the Greek, the Hindoo, and the Catholic, deems any system cruel which proves his God to be more unlike himself than he had believed; and he deems that system the cruellest which proves his God to be most unlike himself. Now, Agnosticism, in showing not only that the Ultimate Cause is utterly unlike any man, but that it is utterly unlike any conception which any man can ever frame, proves that the Ultimate Cause is absolutely unknowable. And so Agnosticism, inasmuch as it robs the Theist of his inferior ideas concerning that Power of which the Universe is the manifestation, seems to pauperise him; and since, in thus robbing him of his inferior ideas, Agnosticism leaves in his mind a painful void, Agnosticism cannot fail to appear to him cruel. But, in place of every inferior idea which Agnosticism destroys, it supplies an idea of a superior order; and this mental gap remains, not because Agnosticism is cruel, but because the Theistic idea belongs to a lower stage of mental evolution and the Agnostic idea to a higher

stage. One cannot put new wine into old bottles, or new thoughts into old heads, else the bottles or the heads burst.

But there is a second and a more subtle objection which an advanced Theist may make. Agnosticism, he may declare, is founded upon the Unknowable, and is, therefore, founded upon nothing at all. Since the Unknowable is a pure negation, it is a pure nothing. Who ever heard of a negation as the basis of a philosophy?

This is an utter misconception. As we saw when considering the relativity of knowledge, our consciousness of the Unknowable is not negative, but positive, and is the only indestructible element of thought. All other elements may be annihilated, but our consciousness of the Unknowable persists at all times and under all circumstances, and can cease to be only when consciousness itself ceases to be. How, then, can that which is a necessary datum of every thought be a negation? The Unknowable is not the All-Nothingness, but the All-Being; not the only Unreality, but the only Reality; and this Reality, so far from being a negative, is the one positive Existence, of which all other existences, that of the world and that of man included, are but Appearances.

If, now, we turn from the objections of the Theist to those of the Atheist, we shall find that, while they are not less audacious, they are more discriminative.

I am, affirms the Atheist, a Materialist. I believe in one existence. That one existence is Matter, which, since it has neither beginning nor end, is eternal. Of that one existence I know modes only; and of those modes I know attributes only. To speak specifically: Matter is the one existence; I am a mode of that existence; and intelligence is an attribute of that mode. I hold, then, that Agnosticism is unphilosophical, because it postulates two existences—a Knowable and an Unknowable—where one is sufficient to account for all the phenomena of Nature.

We reply (1) that Agnosticism does not posit two existences, and (2) that Matter is not sufficient to account for all the phenomena of Nature.

In the first place, to suppose that Agnosticism has two existences is to betray a want of superior abstraction-power. The Unknowable is the sole real existence; and the Knowable, in all its forms, so far from being a second real existence, is simply a manifestation of the Unknowable. In this view, the whole universe, including Time, Space, Matter, Motion, Force, is merely an effect of the Unknowable Cause. The most conspicuous philosophical difference, therefore, between Atheism and Agnosticism is that, while the former holds Matter to be the

Ultimate Cause, the latter holds the Ultimate Cause to be unknowable.

But, in the second place, Matter cannot be the Ultimate Cause ; for our conception of Matter, being derived from our conception of Force, is a derivative cause, and not the primary one. In its final analysis Matter is known to us only in terms of Force ; and, since Matter is resolvable into a simpler form, it must have been caused. How, then, can Matter, which is caused, be the First Cause, or the Uncaused ? Force, on the contrary, is absolutely undecomposable, and consequently is a more elementary mode of existence than Matter. So that, if anything of which we have any knowledge can be the Ultimate Cause, that something must be Force, and not Matter. As long as Matter cannot account for Force, there is at any rate one phenomenon beyond its reach ; and as long as there is a single phenomenon for which Matter cannot account it is idle to assert that Matter is sufficient to account for *all* the phenomena of Nature.

Thus it is that Atheism, seeking to destroy Agnosticism, is itself destroyed, and destroyed with its own weapons of war. And thus it is that Atheism, like Theism, perishes, leaving behind nothing but pure Agnosticism.

The Pantheist objects to Agnosticism on the ground that there is nothing outside Nature. Nature, he says, is omnipotent and omnipresent. According to his idea, Agnosticism is illogical.

Well, all depends on his definition of Nature. If he defines Nature as the sum-total of what is, what has been, and what is to be, then of course there can be nothing outside Nature ; and any one who, intellectually, gets outside Nature does not gain Agnosticism, but loses his mental-balance. This is exactly what Hegel did, when, taking up his position outside Nature, he tried to "re-think the great thought of Creation."

What, however, do we know of that which is inside Nature ? Nothing but the phenomenal. In its ultimate essence everything in Nature is utterly incomprehensible, as has been shown again and again. Hence Nature herself inevitably brings us round to the Unknowable, and the Unknowable to Agnosticism.

The principal Deistic reason for rejecting Agnosticism is not a reason at all, but a pure assumption. The Deist supposes that Agnosticism asserts the Ultimate Cause to be impersonal, and that impersonality is an attribute inferior to personality.

Now, it is incumbent upon us to accept what has been proved respecting the relativity of knowledge, and we are bound thereby neither to

affirm nor to deny the personality of the Unknowable. We are bound humbly to submit to the established limits of our intelligence, and it is sheer folly to rebel against those limits. Let those impetuous ones who long to circumscribe the Absolute and to fathom the unfathomable dash out their brains against the iron girders that encircle their knowledge. We prefer to be calm and still, not asserting and not denying anything concerning that of which nothing can ever be known.

To assume, as opponents of Agnosticism do invariably assume, that our choice of attributes lies between personality and something lower than personality, is to show that they have a very superficial grasp of the subject. The alternative is not between personality and something lower, but *between personality and something higher*. "Is it not just possible that there is a mode of being as much transcending Intelligence and Will as these transcend mechanical motion? It is true that we are totally unable to conceive any such higher mode. But this is not a reason for questioning its existence; it is rather the reverse." We have seen that the everlasting imbecilities of the human mind make us wholly incompetent to form even an approach to a conception of that which underlies all phenomena, and that this incompetence is the incompetence of the bounded to grasp the Boundless. It follows that we cannot in any sense conceive the Ultimate Cause, for the all-sufficient reason that the Ultimate Cause is in every sense greater than can be conceived. Agnosticism, therefore, wisely refrains from ascribing to it any attributes whatever, on the ground that all such attributes are not only not elevating and ennobling, but are positively derogatory and degrading.

If the highest manifestation of personality is that of man; if the best of men has but a short life and a little mind—occupies but a small space, and that but for a little while—has an imperfect physique and consequently an imperfect character, what shall we say of the Deists, who try to exalt their God by bringing him down to the level of a man, and who clothe the Unknowable in the rags of a petty personality? Surely Agnosticism is more reasonable, without being less reverent, than Deism.

Finally, let us see what the Positivist has to say against Agnosticism.

In his view, the only true god is M. Auguste Comte, and his only true prophet Mr. Frederic Harrison. Other gods there are, and other prophets; but they belong to the English mythology. However that may be—whether Mr. Harrison be or be not the John-the-Baptist of Positivism—he is unmistakably the loudest as well as the least-discordant of the Positivist voices crying in the wilderness of England. His one message, with its numberless variations, is: *Repent ye, for the kingdom of Comte is at*

hand. Prepare ye the way of the Positivist. Make straight in the desert of Agnosticism a highway for your royal Religion of Humanity. But the Mr. Harrison of Comtism, unlike the Mr. Harrison of the more ancient system, delivers his message, not with all the barbarous surroundings of camel's hair and leathern girdle and locusts and wild honey, but with all the captivating accompaniments of learning and of logic, of criticism and of culture. Mr. Harrison is indeed at once the most brilliant representative and the most able exponent of Positivism in England. This is why what he has to urge against Agnosticism is entitled to respect and claims reply. It is evident, however, that in order to overturn a philosophy like the Spencerian something more than brilliance, something more than ability, is necessary. That something is an intellectual depth and breadth, by the absence of which Mr. Harrison is pre-eminently distinguished. At all events, this is the only explanation which is open to us, and which is honourable to both sides. On no other supposition can be explained Mr. Harrison's strange, his unrelenting, his perpetual antagonism to Agnosticism. Mark, we do not mean to imply that the Synthetic Philosophy is overturnable, even by a foe so formidable as might be made by adding all the brilliance and ability which Mr. Harrison possesses to all the profundity which he ought to possess, and multiplying the product by the sum-total of the saints in the Positivist pantheon. That philosophy we hold to be as lasting as are the everlasting hills, and as ceaseless as is the never-ceasing sea.

Mr. Harrison seldom speaks save to sing the praises of Positivism ; and he never praises Positivism without blaming Agnosticism. At regular intervals,* in his livelier moments and in his liveliest manner, he ridicules Agnosticism. It is, he thinks, a side-splitting sight to see a saintly Agnostic holding communion with the Unknowable, seeking consolation of the Unknowable, praying to the Unknowable. Such a spectacle were indeed one to move the gods to mirth. But such a spectacle is purely Harrisonian. To Mr. Harrison it is nothing that Agnosticism is not a religion, but a philosophy, and that, as a philosophy, it knows naught of communion, of consolation, or of prayer. For him

* See *Contemporary Review*, 1883 ; *Nineteenth Century*, 1884 ; and *Fortnightly Review*, March, 1885. Scarcely three months have elapsed since Mr. Harrison retired under a crushing defeat from his magazine-controversy with Herbert Spencer. The champion of Comtism now re-asserts, with a charming innocence, all the errors which were then so luminously exposed, and reiterates, with an innocence that would be charming if it were not perplexing, all the misconceptions which were then so rigidly corrected. On the whole, we believe that Mr. Harrison's prize performances are less damaging to the Agnostic's position than is continuous walking to the pedestrian's pumps, or continuous thumbing to the Positivist's Catechism.

it is enough that the smile has completed its circle, and that nobody is any the worse ; though, we fear, few are much the better.

But let Mr. Harrison look at home. What he urges against Agnosticism as a religion is pointless and senseless, because Agnosticism is not a religion. But Positivism professes to be a religion ; and the arrows which, when shot at Agnosticism, are blurred and blunted, when thrown at Positivism become as sharp as spears and as pointed as needles. Positivism holds that the *Etre Suprême* is Humanity. But what is Humanity ? By Humanity Positivists mean the Collective Life—both bad and good—of Society, in all ages—past, present, and future—and in all lands—east and west, north and south. Comtists do homage not to human beings, but to an abstract something known as the Collective Life of Society, or Humanity. They worship, therefore, the abstraction of an amalgamation of moral black and white. Let us now—mimicing Mr. Harrison's amusing manner—ask, Can any one hope anything of the abstraction of an amalgamation of moral black and white ? Whose sympathy was ever evoked, whose prayer ever answered, by the abstraction of an amalgamation of moral black and white ? Or where is the broken-hearted mother, sorrowing over the corpse of the son with whom have died all her cloudless hopes—where is such a one who ever found consolation in the contemplation of the abstraction of an amalgamation of moral black and white ? Here indeed are profound questions. For the answers let Mr. Harrison go and bribe the Sphinx ; or, what would be much more to his taste, if much less to our edification, go and interrogate the chief saint in the Positivist Calendar.

But to be serious. In setting up a Finite Knowable like Humanity as the *Etre Suprême*, Positivism makes a fatal mistake. "The religious sentiment, having in the course of its evolution come to have for its object of contemplation the Infinite Unknowable, can never again (except by retrogression) take for its object of contemplation a Finite Knowable." So that, while Positivism is not what it claims to be, Agnosticism does not claim to be what it is not—a religion.

Up to this point our Exposition has dealt exclusively with the Unknowable. Before proceeding to consider the Knowable it will be well very briefly to recapitulate.

It will be remembered that in the paper on "Religion and Science: the Alienation" we set out with the statement that in things erroneous there is a germ of truth ; and that, having found facts corroborating that statement, we saw reasons for believing that Religion and Science would ultimately coalesce in some truth common to both. Next, in examining the doctrine of "The Relativity of All Knowledge," we were

forced to the conclusion that the truth which was to reconcile Religion and Science must be the truth that the Power which the Universe manifests—a Power for which we have no name but the Unknowable—is inscrutable. Then, in the article on “Religion and Science: the Reconciliation,” it was shown how this great truth united in absolute harmony Religion and Science, and how this uniting gave rise to Agnosticism. And, lastly, in the present essay, we have answered many reasonable and some unreasonable objections to Agnosticism, and have proved that the Agnostic Philosophy is on every side unassailable.

Having reached the conclusion that that which manifests itself to us is unknowable, we shall next month turn our attention to that which is manifested, or the Knowable.

IGNOTUS.

GRIEF AND SHAME.

WHEN for the Gracchi all Italia wept
 Cornelia for her noble sons wept not :
 Shame for her country dulled the mother's love.
 Away corruption, cowardice, had swept
 Those godlike virtues which had marked the lot
 Of Rome among the nations : far above
 The anguish of regret Cornelia rose,
 And saw in craven Romans Rome's worst foes :
 She deemed her brave sons fortunate, for they
 No longer saw, of every vice a prey,
 Their fatherland : better sublime to die
 Than share the curse, behold the infamy !
 Sublime Cornelia ! Warm thou didst adore
 Thy sons, but Rome's unsullied glory more.

WILLIAM MACCALL.

THE GOD IDEA.

"KNOWING his adopted land well, the Eastern does not require recondite volumes to explain 'Dionysiac myths' or 'solar theories,' as the old faiths are now called in the West. He sees these pervading the tales and epics of East and West alike, just as Yahvism or Yahu-ism pervades the Scriptures of Jews or Yahus—that ever-familiar and expressive faith-term by which alone Asia knows the 'Yahudean' race." While fully admitting the true character of the old faith as here expressed, yet, with all due deference to one of such acknowledged repute in the literary world as Major-General Forlong, whose splendid work entitled "Rivers of Faith" (Preface, p. xxi.) contains the above paragraph, it may be fairly urged that the educated few only, both among Easterns and Westerns, have hitherto been capable of discerning the vein of solar myth which pervades all systems of religion; while the vast multitude of ignorant and credulous people even yet perceive, or think they perceive, the Divine handiwork in the particular sacred oracle to which they firmly pin their faith. The Hindu supreme deity is known as Brahm, the Persian as Ormuzd, the Mohammedan as Allah, and the Jewish and Christian as El, Elohim, Yahouh (or Jehovah), God, etc. Probably few among the many millions who worship these various deities know much or anything about their origin, innocently imagining that the Deity they bow allegiance to once manifested itself to some chosen individual, to whom it gave a revelation, the facts of which were handed down to posterity. They little dream of the vast cycles of time that have rolled past since the brain of man attained such a state of perfection as to enable it to evolve the idea of Deity. It is utterly impossible for the human mind to grasp the enormous interval of time that has elapsed since primeval man emerged from the condition of unreasoning existence to enter upon the bright dawn of intellectual activity, which has developed into such mighty proportions as we behold to-day. Let us carry the mind back far beyond the Dark Ages, through the classic era, as far even as the very commencement of Egyptian history; and even then we find ourselves but little nearer that remote period in which the first spark of intelligence made its *début* upon the platform of life. In imagination we may go still farther back, and view the wonders of that ancient Asian civilisation which preceded that of the ancient Egyptians and Greeks,

and which was probably derived very gradually from the earliest social conceptions of the Caucasian branch of the Polynesian primitive man. Still we are ages away from the period we desire to arrive at ; and even were we able to trace the human family back to that remote time when man could not be said to partake more of the character of the human than the ape species, still we should even then be unable to point to the precise moment when intellect shed its glorious rays upon the race, making bright, clear, and beautiful what before was dark, misty, and unmeaning. The ancient *Prosimiæ* gradually became *Catarrhine* apes, which, in their turn, as slowly assumed the characters of the *Anthropoidæ*, and afterwards of ape-like men ; but the time required for this imperceptibly gradual process of evolution was probably many hundred thousands of years, during which period, or perhaps even at a prior time, the first intellectual spark became manifest : how, when, or for what ultimate purpose it is apparently beyond our power to devise.

How soon after the dawn of intellect the conception of Deity was evolved in the human brain it is equally impossible to say ; but the probability is that the date was a very early one, for it seems highly probable that such a conception would be among the very first efforts of the mind, the materials necessary for the stimulation of such an effort being at hand at any moment. We can imagine our early fathers groping in the darkness of ignorance, with mental powers on a par with those of the awakening minds of our own children, seeing bogies in every natural phenomenon, and tremblingly glowering at the spectra of their own imaginations. Having no experience of the past or knowledge of the future, they would indeed be in a most helpless condition, relying entirely upon the instinctive capabilities they had inherited from their ancestors. By degrees, however, their various faculties would be further awakened by impressions received from external objects ; their wants would be multiplied in proportion to their intellectual development, causing them to manifest a desire for industry ; and their self-consciousness would arouse within them a feeling of dignity and importance to which they had hitherto been strangers. Thus gradually would the race cast off its animal and put on its human clothes. The old plan of hand-to-mouth existence would be abolished by the newly-developed reason of man ; the innumerable dangers which confronted him would undoubtedly stimulate him to approach his fellows with the object of establishing mutual aid and of co-operating for their common welfare ; and a feeling of confident superiority over others of the animal kingdom would become apparent among them. Not only would man's attention be arrested by the impending dangers of each day, the necessity of procuring sustenance for himself and family, and the obvious advantages accruing from co-operation, but also by the constantly-

recurring natural phenomena, such as the rising and setting of the sun, moon and stars, the never-ending succession of day and night, etc., as well as by the no less wonderful, and certainly more awful, occasional natural occurrences, such as lightning, thunder, and earthquake. He would be as much struck with wonder and amazement at the one set of phenomena as with awe at the other. The returning sun-light would each morning produce joy in his heart equally as much as the inevitable recurrence each night of darkness would produce a feeling of sadness, dread, and despair. We can easily imagine the long hours of horror our first fathers must have passed through each night among the yells and howls of the savage monsters by which they were surrounded, and how they anxiously looked forward to the return of that glorious orb which would bring back to them daylight, sunshine, warmth, and happiness. What a boon it must have been to them! Can we wonder that they should have regarded the sun with particular affection? It would have been remarkable, indeed, had they not done so; and it is more than probable that this daily re-appearance of the sun on the eastern horizon was actually what prompted the first conception of deity. The very oldest mythology with which we are acquainted appears strongly to bear out this theory, and, indeed, in every other mythological system we find the re-appearing sun to be one of the principal objects of devotion and affection. If we turn our gaze to that part of Asia, along the banks of the Oxus, over which our Aryan ancestors wandered thousands of years before the time of the earliest Egyptian dynasty, we find there a clue to the origin of the original conception of deity. Among these early people were composed the hymns of the *Rig-Veda*, which are probably the earliest records of any race, and in which we find personified the phenomena of the heavens and earth, the storm, the wind, the rain, the stars, etc. The earth is represented as a flat, indefinite surface, existing passively, and forming the foundation of the whole universe; while above it the luminous vault of heaven forms a dwelling place for the fertile and life-giving light and a covering for the earth below. To the earth the Aryans gave the name of Prihovi, "the wide expanse;" the vault of heaven they called Varuna, "the vault;" while the light between the two, in the cloud region, they named Dyaus, "the luminous air," "the dawn." Varuna and Prihovi, in space, together begat Agni, the fire-god, the sun in heaven and life-giver of the universe; and Soma, the ambrosial deity of earth, god of immortality, fertiliser of the waters, nourisher of plants, and quickener of the semen of men and animals. In these hymns frequent mention is made of the joy experienced at the return of dawn, and of the saddening effect produced upon the mind by the ever-recurring twilight which ushered in the dark and dreary night. We meet with incantations expressive of the wildest excitement

at the welcome appearance of the dawn-god, Dyaus, which heralded the approach of the sun-god, Agni, who is led up to the summit of his ascension, or bosom of Varuna, by the conquering god of battle, Indra, the defeater of the evil powers of darkness; and we find the most pathetic appeals both to Agni and Indra to remain longer over the earth, and co-operate with Soma in replenishing nature, instead of sinking into the twilight, or shades of evening, to be slain by Vritra, "the coverer," and tormented in the darkness of night by Ahi, the dragon, and other cruel monsters. This is precisely the drama we should expect to find depicted in the earliest writings of man; is the root of all future religious ideas; and is still to be found pervading almost every modern religious faith. It is a beautiful representation of the earliest yearnings and fears of our forefathers; and, though the picture is now and then almost effaced by numerous subsequent additions of mythological lore, yet the original conception remains indelibly depicted in the religions of the present day, furnishing us with the key to the study of comparative mythology.

HERBERT JUNIUS HARDWICKE, M.D., F.R.C.S.

(To be continued.)

GEORGE ELIOT'S LIFE.*

SECOND NOTICE.

TRANSITION periods in the department of religious thought are marked by two great difficulties—the difficulty of maintaining religious emotion without the ideas with which it has been usually allied, and the difficulty of preserving a fair, rational estimate of the historical value of a religious system when the superstitious regard for it has passed away. These difficulties are constantly apparent. So closely has religious emotion been associated with Christian ideas—indeed, so dependent has it been made upon them—that with their loss the emotion has been condemned as a lingering weakness, and has been crushed and eradicated as a childish characteristic, essentially unmanly and unscientific. And those who have had their judgment warped by a superstitious reverence for the expression of a mere phase of religious feeling are very apt, in their first consciousness of freedom and manhood, to despise that of which erst they thought too much, and, going from one extreme to the other, deem of no account that which they had over-estimated, and judge to be less than human that which they had before believed to be divine. It requires a deep nature and a great mind to avoid extremes; or, having been educated in one extreme, to avoid going to the other in the moment of intellectual awakening. It requires that nice blending of progressiveness and conservatism that ensures advance, but saves from rashness, and, while making it possible to judge fairly of the probabilities of the future, makes it possible also to read fairly the lessons of the past, and to acknowledge indebtedness to that which has been out-grown.

In reading the "Life" we are struck with the depth and intensity of George Eliot's religious emotion. Though she had passed away for ever from the Hannah More stage, and had deliberately substituted

"The choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence"

for the dream of personal, conscious immortality; though she had passed

* *George Eliot's Life, as Related in her Letters and Journals.* Arranged and edited by her Husband, J. W. Cross. Three volumes. 42s. (William Blackwood & Sons, Edinburgh and London.)

through the Strauss phase, and had journeyed on to Feuerbach, Comte, and Herbert Spencer, yet we find that the warm springs of her religious emotion were untouched and unspoiled. In Dresden, visiting the picture gallery, she went into the Madonna Cabinet, and sat down for an instant before that picture which has impressed all of us who have seen it; "but a sort of awe," she writes, "as if I were suddenly in the presence of some glorious being, made my heart swell too much for me to remain comfortably, and we hurried out of the room." After a number of visits, this picture "became harder and harder to leave." Writing to Miss Sarah Hennell in 1861, she describes how she went to a certain chapel and heard "a respectable old Unitarian gentleman," and adds: "I enjoyed the fine selection of collects he read from the Liturgy. What an age of earnest faith grasping a noble conception of life, and determined to bring all things into harmony with it, has recorded itself in the simple, pregnant, rythmical English of those collects and of the Bible! The contrast when the good old man got into the pulpit and began to pray in a borrowed, washy lingo—extempore in more senses than one!" We can easily imagine the contrast; but we think that the majority of those who have found a scientific basis of morals would hardly write in that strain of the collects. It was in the same spirit that George Eliot read the "Imitation" and the Bible; in which she went to hear the Cardinal; and in which she attended to the duties of life, and undertook and accomplished her special mission.

Still more are we struck with George Eliot's fair and candid estimate of the historical value of that form of faith which she had left. She never rails at it as the source of incalculable mischief, as we often think we have some ground for doing, but takes it justly as having served an end, and on that account worthy of respect. This is made evident in her works, notably in the exceptionally touching addresses of Dinah Morris. And in the "Life" there are many proofs. To Mrs. Beecher Stowe she wrote: "A thorough comprehension of the mixed moral influence shed on society by dogmatic systems is rare, even among writers, and one misses it altogether in English drawing-room talk;" and, writing to Mr. Cross in 1873, she said: "All the great religions of the world, historically considered, are rightly the objects of deep reverence and sympathy; they are the record of spiritual struggles, which are types of our own. This is to me pre-eminently true of Hebrewism and Christianity, on which my own youth was nourished. And in this sense I have no antagonism towards any religious belief, but a strong outflow of sympathy." This quotation suggests another characteristic of the large mind which can duly appreciate that which nevertheless does not satisfy its needs—viz., sympathy with other forms and faiths. The continuation of the last quotation is: "Every community met to worship

the highest good (which is understood to be expressed by God) carries me along in its main current; and, if there were not reasons against my following such an inclination, I should go to church or chapel constantly, for the sake of the delightful emotions of fellowship which come over me in religious assemblies." This rare faculty is shown in "*Daniel Deronda*," the Jewish element in which led to a good deal of controversy and some remonstrance. Of this she wrote: "Precisely because I felt that the usual attitude of Christians towards Jews is—I hardly know whether to say more impious or more stupid, when viewed in the light of their professed principles, I therefore felt urged to treat Jews with such sympathy and understanding as my nature and knowledge could attain to."

This particular direction and measure of sympathy is very rare, and consequently very impressive. In George Eliot it was only a part of that intense sympathy which was her chief charm, and contributed more largely than anything else to make her what she was. This sympathy is seen in all her writings; and, in a letter to Mrs. Bray, she said: "The only effect I ardently long to produce by my writings is that those who read them should be better able to *imagine* and to *feel* the pains and the joys of those who differ from themselves in everything but the broad fact of being struggling, erring human creatures."

Of course, it is open to us to argue that this very faculty made it impossible for George Eliot ever to become a pioneer. Her work had primarily to do with the feelings and emotions. She did not attempt to lead the thought of the day; and it is evident that, great as her sympathy was, she had little sympathy with the advanced, aggressive section of the thinkers of her day, though some of them were counted among her friends. "I have too profound a conviction," she wrote, "of the efficacy that lies in all sincere faith, and the spiritual blight that comes with no faith, to have any negative propagandism in me. In fact, I have very little sympathy with Freethinkers as a class, and have lost all interest in mere antagonism to religious doctrines." We judge that, while there may be a reckless iconoclasm that does more harm than good, there may be a sympathetic tenderness and consideration towards practically effete faiths the effect of which is to retard the progress of truth, and to tend to sacrifice the truth and strength of society of the future to the comfort and convenience of a diminishing section of society in the present. Still, doubtless George Eliot, in her influence upon her personal friends and correspondents, as upon all the readers of her books, has exercised a decided influence in the direction of the goal towards which we are laboriously striving.

George Eliot's special function was, as she well described it, "that of the æsthetic, not the doctrinal, teacher—the rousing of the nobler

emotions, which make mankind desire the social right, not the prescribing of special measures, concerning which the artistic mind, however strongly moved by social sympathy, is often not the best judge." That function she well and consistently fulfilled, and that function, though differing from that of the doctrinal teacher and the initiator of intellectual and social reformations, is yet closely allied to it, and possibly is more essential to its ultimate success than is sometimes realised by the more active and dogmatic reformer.

Together with George Eliot's religious emotion and sympathy must be mentioned her sensitiveness. This characteristic, in its unusual development, almost, if not quite, reached morbidity. It was seen, to some extent, in her disposition to keep aloof from society, but especially in connection with the criticism of her books. In the case of the Liggins affair it was particularly manifest. At first she was inclined to enjoy the joke, and laughed over it, and sent on, for Blackwood's delectation, a letter she had received from Warwickshire, asking information in this strain: "I want to ask you if you have read 'Adam Bede' or the 'Scenes of Clerical Life,' and whether you know that the author is Mr. Liggins?.....A deputation of Dissenting parsons went over to ask him to write for the *Eclectic*, and they found him washing his slop-basin at a pump.....One of the parsons said that he inspired them with a reverence that would have made any impertinent question impossible." But a very short time afterwards we find her extremely agitated about this "Liggins business," and, indeed, her agitation seems to be somewhat out of proportion to the measure and possible mischief of the impudent and silly imposture. Her sensibility to criticism was most acute. She was quite conscious of it, and confessed it. "It is a wretched weakness of my nature to be so strongly affected by these things, and yet how is it possible to put one's best heart and soul into a book, and be hardened to the result—be indifferent to the proof whether one has really a vocation to speak to one's fellowmen in that way?" And in another place: "I feel that the influence of talking about my books, even to you [Mrs. Bray] and Mrs. Bodichon, has been so bad to me that I should like to be able to keep silence concerning them for evermore. If people were to buzz round me with their remarks or compliments, I should lose the repose of mind and truthfulness of production without which no good, healthy books can be written. Talking about my books, I find, has much the same malign effect on me as talking of my feelings or my religion."

It has been maintained that this sensitiveness resulted from the peculiar position in which she had placed herself through the Lewes relationship, and it has been hinted that in after years, when she discovered what had really been the relative gain and loss of that important

step, she may have wished to be freed from a bondage that had become irksome. A careful perusal of the "Life" convinces us that this is a mistaken idea altogether. To the end of Mr. Lewes's life, in her letters and her journal, there is abundant evidence that her affection remained unchanged, and that she was satisfied with the fulness of her life. What she had lost was a busy, public, thought-dissipating life, which, with her constantly-recurring *malaise*, would have unfitted her for any extended, important literary effort. What she gained was the incentive to create those forms and pictures, embodying great ideas, which have given her the foremost place in the domain of philosophic fiction; sympathetic assistance from one able to appreciate her genius, and who at the same time was candid in criticism; mental aliment and inspiration, drawn from intellectual fellowship with some of the greatest minds and noblest spirits of the age; and seclusion and leisure to follow her bent and work out her great schemes. Her extreme sensitiveness was constitutional; it was the result of a great mind and ardent spirit being allied to a feeble and frail *physique*. Indeed, it is a matter of amazement to us that, constituted as she was, she could have done what she did—so much and so excellently well. As to the propriety of taking the step, it seems to us profanation to discuss it. Who shall judge one who was ruled by far higher than conventional ideas, and who wrote: "If there is any one action or relation of my life which is, and always has been, profoundly serious, it is my relation to Mr. Lewes"? Elsewhere she says, as the result of deep thought and experience: "There is really no moral 'sanction' but this inward impulse. The will of God is the same thing as the will of other men, compelling us to work and avoid what they have seen to be harmful to social existence. Disjoined from any perceived good, the Divine will is simply so much as we have ascertained of the facts of existence which compel obedience at our peril. Any other notion comes from the supposition of arbitrary revelation." One who had reached such a level is not to be judged by common standards.

Of course, it was natural that George Eliot's actual opinions should be discussed, and that she should be claimed by various schools, religious and philosophical. It is made clear in the "Life" that she had little sympathy with popular Spiritualism. It appeared to her "either as degrading folly, imbecile in the estimate of evidence, or else as impudent imposture," and that "to rest any fundamental part of religion on such a basis is a melancholy misguidance of men's minds from the true sources of high and pure emotion." She had a great deal of sympathy with Positivism, which was doubtless fostered by her intimacy with Dr. Congreve and Mr. Harrison; and she writes in 1867: "My attitude increases continually for the illumination Comte has conferred to my life;" but it does not appear that she ever identified

herself with the "cause" of which he was the acknowledged founder. The attitude of her mind was Agnostic: this was bound to be the case with one who was accustomed to bring her keen logical faculty to bear upon all questions, and to analyse with care every proposition. Such a one would, of necessity, arrive at the only logical intellectual position. And the result was that, with increasing years, there was less and less disposition to waste time with the discussion of speculative puzzles incapable of solution, and a steady growth of the desire to do some practical work in the world while the opportunity lasted. "Life is a big thing, as you say. No wonder there comes a season when we cease to look round and say, 'How shall I enjoy?' but, as in a country which has been visited by sword, pestilence, and famine, think only how we shall help the wounded, and how find seed for the next harvest—how till the earth and make a little time of gladness for those who are being born without their own asking."

It remains for us yet to speak of George Eliot's literary genius as illustrated in the "Life."

F. SYDNEY MORRIS.

PANONTISTIC FRAGMENTS.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

Is the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount the loftiest imaginable? But for the imbecile habit of praising everything in the Bible it would scarcely be needful to ask the question. Religion is impure and morality is ignoble when recompense is the leading principle, or, indeed, is introduced at all. Yet in the Sermon on the Mount recompense is the predominant idea; redeemed, indeed, from the Hebrew vileness and vulgarity by paradox and exaggeration, but still there. A few beautiful Christian souls have loved God for his own sake. Nearly all followers of Christ, however, make a bargain with God, and refuse to serve him unless he reward them.

THE IMITATION OF CHRIST.

The most popular of devotional books is that by Thomas a'Kempis on "The Imitation of Christ." Were the book far more beautiful than it is, the question would still spontaneously arise, whether imitation—the imitation even of what is highest and holiest—is not an ignoble motive. Everything in the universe should keep its distinctive character, and not strive to imitate anything else. Suppose it were right and wise for one human being to imitate another, must there not be a perpetual controversy respecting the nature of perfection? One man may deem that an excellence which another deems a defect. There are millions of persons in the United States of America who think that the perfect man is he who abstains from strong drinks. To the Greek and the Roman the perfect man was the ardent patriot, the devoted citizen. The perfect man of the savage is the man who kills the greatest number of foes and bears tortures the most heroically. All ages and all nations have their own idea and ideal of the perfect man; all systems and all sects create a new idea and ideal. Yea, consciously or unconsciously, every individual has his own idea and ideal of the perfect man and of perfection. Jesus, the Christos, is enveloped in myth. The Four Gospels cannot be accepted as exact and trustworthy records. Their fabulous statements and their flagrant disagreement with each other rob the Gospels of all historical authority. How can we distinguish between the historical Jesus and the mythical Christ? And how do we know that, in striving to imitate the historical Jesus, we are not imitating the

mythical Christ—that is to say, a phantom? But, sweeping myth, as far as that is possible, away, are we to regard the historical Jesus as in all points and in all circumstances worthy of imitation? Besides being enslaved by Jewish prejudices, hampered by Jewish limitations, he was swayed by the tendencies of his period, by pity to excess, and by resignation to excess, in the absence of the heroic virtues. But in our own day pity to excess would be supremely dangerous. Pity to excess would lead to that indiscriminate alms-giving which has been so often, so strongly condemned; and resignation to excess would make a craven community more craven still. It is the heroic virtues which are now needed, not those virtues which Jesus and the divinest men of his time preached and practised. Furthermore, Jesus is believed by Christians to have been a supernatural being; yea, most of them go so far as to think that he was the incarnate God himself. But how can poor mortals imitate the spirit of immensity? Let every man, then, shun imitation, even the imitation of what is best and most beautiful; let every man be his own law and his own life—be what the great creative mystery has made him. The more a man is himself, really and ideally, the more must he feel Jesus to be the most celestial of his brethren, the sweetest, most loving of angelic souls.

BELIEVERS AND UNBELIEVERS.

In any circumstances it is absurd and unjust to treat Scepticism as a crime; but much which in these days is anathematised as Scepticism is simply the hunger and the hunt for diviner religious nourishment. He who is denounced as an unbeliever differs often from the bigot who curses him only in being a more catholic believer. A man is called a believer if he thinks that God never revealed himself except to a small and ignoble Asiatic horde, and that there is no word of God but the Bible. If he thinks that God reveals himself at every point of time and space, and to every conscious atom, he is scorned as an unbeliever, and may be burned as a heretic. If miracles are possible, why should they be limited to Palestine, and why should they have ceased two thousand years ago? And, if they are not possible, the exclusive claims of Christianity vanish, and every religion must be judged by its distinctive merits. When the supernatural authority of the Gospel is overthrown, the supposed moral and religious superiority of the Gospel disappears. Besides being a conglomerate of plagiarisms, Christianity is inferior in moral elevation and devotional depth to some other religions—indeed, to nearly all religions except the grossest and the gloomiest. Now, it seems odd enough that a man should be hated as an unbeliever for recognising the universality of the religious sentiment in all ages, and the universality of the food furnished to the religious sentiment. In

like fashion, none should be deemed astronomers but those who reject the Copernican system! A God dwelling in a small barren and ugly tract to the north of Arabia, or glaring and growling in wrath from the lurid clouds above it, was the only God! Godless was all the rest of the earth—yea, all the rest of the universe! You are an unbeliever if you protest against the insane conception, and declare that paltry Palestine is not immensity! No, my beloved but stupid and fanatical brethren; ye are the real unbelievers, because ye see and confess no God but the God of Canaan and the Conventicle—a God, in the main, just but boastful, selfish, capricious, revengeful, and ferocious.

MORIBUND CHRISTIANITY.

Writers who torture their brain in perpetual hunger for the superlatively subtle and ingenious would be intolerably provoking if they were not, from their very pretentiousness and absurdity, amusing. They are invariably sciolists. The shallowest of thinkers, they may have a considerable range of miscellaneous information; but of profound, and especially of accurate, knowledge they are wholly destitute. To escape from the conventionalities and the commonplaces, they rush into fierce chase of paradoxes, just as a hunter, neglecting the chief and valuable game of a country, might scour mountain and forest and glen to find some odd, but insignificant and worthless, and perchance loathsome, animal.

An English writer, not altogether without acuteness, but in whom the love of the ingenious, the subtle, the paradoxical, is a kind of delirium, is sorely perplexed to discover why Christianity, though of Asiatic origin, has not conquered Asia—is, indeed, “severed from Asia by an impenetrable wall.” The writer surely forgets that in the early days Christianity gained more numerous and more ardent disciples in Asia and Africa than in Europe, and that even now in Armenian and other Oriental realms there is a large multitude of Christians. If Christianity is of Asiatic origin, so are all the great religions. But, though of Asiatic origin, Christianity has never been Asiatic in character. It was a compromise, a conglomerate; it had wonderful assimilative power; it took its theology from Greece, its organisation from Rome. In its rites, in its symbols, in its worship of images and of the saints, it was merely a transfigured Polytheism. If in the mediæval period it was omnipotent, it was because it assumed all the mediæval attributes. Unlike Moham-medanism, Christianity was always pliant and passive, in order that it might be aggressive and victorious. Pascal, the fanatical and sophistical theologian of Christianity, assailed Jesuitism with merciless satire. But the doctrine of accommodation and the habit of simulation and suppression were no new things; they were in the world before Jesuitism; they

had from the beginning been in Christianity itself. Loyola and his followers merely built into a system what Christianity had invariably practised. Paul taught a modified Jesuitism. If Christianity in its early stages had extended exclusively eastward, it would simply have anticipated Mohammedanism ; it would have remained a pure, an absolute Monotheism. Oriental elements entered into Christianity, but only through a Hellenic channel and in a Hellenic shape. Though not severed from Asia by an impenetrable wall, as this pedantic and theorising writer declares, Christianity cannot dethrone the great Asiatic religions and take their place. It has not the stern simplicity of Mohammedanism ; it has not the miraculous plenitude of Brahmanism ; it has not the mystical depth and ethical sublimity of Buddhism. Besides, Christianity has sunk so low, is so utterly exhausted, that it cannot even offer to man what mediæval Christianity offered. It has become an imbecile, a wriggling and yelling Salvationism, trying to frighten men in order the better to deceive them. That the great Asiatic religions have lost their force and fecundity as well as Christianity it is but fair to admit. Religion liveth evermore ; and that is a holy consolation. Religions die, and that is one of man's tragedies.

ENGLISH PHARISAISM.

With the exception of a few Sadducees and not a few savages, all Englishmen are Pharisees. English Pharisaism is oftener of a contemptible than of a hateful kind. It has seldom tragical intensity, seldom becomes systematic hypocrisy. Frequently it is as fatuous as it is vile. Indeed, silliness, leavened with selfishness, is often its chief characteristic. The English Pharisee believes himself to be a religious being, though what religion is he has not the remotest conception. He patronises God, he bribes God, bargains with God with a pomposity which makes vain attempts to disguise itself as humility. He does not so much attempt to deceive man in his acts of worship as to make himself the central point of his own admiration. In semblances corresponding to his own heart, the hollowest of semblances, he has thorough and unswerving faith. Dramatically interesting he cannot be made ; even in the hands of the cleverest novelist he is dull. Profound and elaborate analysis also would be thrown away upon him. We might as well attempt to analyse the lay figure in a painter's studio. The English rowdy is not a more respectable animal than the English burglar ; but he has a species of justification in the English Pharisee, that solemn and stupid quack, who acknowledges God no further than he sees God to be a part of that sham of shams, the British Constitution.

WILLIAM MACCALL.

THE POPULAR RELIGIOUS FAITH.

FIFTH PAPER.

IN our First Paper on this subject we showed the fallacy of the supposed antiquity of the canonical books of the New Testament. We proved that none of the twenty-seven books, in the form we now have them, can date back further than the middle of the second century. Some are much later, and even in the very earliest of them parts have been interpolated in comparatively modern times.

In the Second Paper we showed that the further we went back to apostolic times, the more we receded from what we now term orthodoxy; that the primitive disciples, those of Jerusalem, trained by the apostle James "the Lord's brother," knew nothing about the divinity of Christ and the dogmas which hinge thereon.

In the Third Paper we went from Pella to Alexandria, the most learned and influential city of the world at that time, and showed that the Christians of Alexandria, trained by Mark the Evangelist, assisted by Barnabas and Apollos, were in doctrine substantially like the Christians of Pella, trained by the apostle James and his brother Simeon.

In the Fourth Paper we showed that the religious systems both of the Jews and of Christians were not divine revelations at all; that the latter was rounded and based on councils, that of Nice being the chief corner-stone; that Aristotle, not the Gospels, was in fact its inspirer, and that logical consistency had far more to do with the matter than Divine revelation.

Our Fifth and present Paper has for its subject the proof that what Christians call the Revelation of God does not answer to that dogma; that it bears no mark at all of such an origin, but many a one wholly inconsistent with such an hypothesis.

We are told that the evidences of Christianity are cumulative, and that the strength of the evidence lies in the united force of the entire mass. We adopt the very same words on our side of the controversy, and say that the evidences against the popular faith are cumulative also, and that their overwhelming strength lies in their united force.

But, without unmasking a whole park of artillery, we would remark that it certainly seems strange, on the face of the subject, that the evidence of a revelation from God should be cumulative; one would

have expected that such a revelation would be simple, patent, and self-evident. It surely ought not to require the united force of all our most learned scholars, archbishops and bishops, deans and canons, professors of languages, legions of commentators, fellows of colleges, councils on councils, a whole Pelion upon Ossa, to prove that God's book is not man's book. If the proof needs all this wisdom, what must the unwise do? A revelation cannot be of much practical use to mankind in general if it needs for its verification such fathomless and varied learning.

Just think for a moment how the affairs of the nation could be carried on if every despatch from Lord Wolseley to our Government, or of Lord Granville to our Commander-in-Chief, had thus to be verified before its authenticity could be accepted. Just suppose that experts must be first summoned to prove the text; philologists to explain the meaning of the words; geographers to point out the localities referred to; historians to explain that the tribes referred to are really in arms; committee after committee, sitting for days, and months, and years, to decide what Wolseley or Granville mean by certain phrases or technical expressions; volume after volume of dispute about the meaning of day, or evening and morning, or the active work of a fierce battle, or the rest taken after the fight was done; war after war of words banded hither and thither to prove whether Lord Wolseley is really Lord Wolseley or some one else, or whether Lord Granville is Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs or a mere myth. Yet this is the sort of thing we are asked to accept in the despatch of God to man, and we are told that the proof of the reality lies in a long series of cumulative evidences. Can anything be more outrageous? It is an insult to common sense. In any human transaction between man and man it would be called downright idiotcy. In a despatch from Lord Granville to Lord Wolseley, or Wolseley to Granville, there ought not to be a shadow of doubt respecting its genuineness, authenticity, or meaning. It should be crisp and clear; its meaning beyond all doubt, and requiring no foreign aid to make it intelligible. How much more, then, a despatch from God, not of ephemeral importance, but of the most stupendous moment, reaching through time into eternity, and affecting the everlasting happiness or misery of those to whom the despatch is sent.

Why, look ye, if the dispatches of Lord Granville need to be clear and crisp on which a mere movement of an army depends, how much more ought it to be so if the correct reading thereof affected the life here and life hereafter of every soldier in the British Army? Yet this, strong as it may seem, is but as the fine dust of a balance to the importance of the dispatch of the great I Am to the Church militant here on earth. There should be no doubt in such a message; no doubt of

genuineness, no doubt of authenticity, no doubt of meaning ; but instead of this, scarcely two persons exist who read the message in the same way. This whole magazine would not suffice even for a list of the names of those who have made themselves immortal by reading the despatches in a different way : Arians and Trinitarians, Greeks and Romans, Protestants of 200 sects and Papists of 200 more, every age teeming some new interpreter, all plausibly correct, and each ready to do battle with the other. Can anything be more utterly absurd ?

A certain despatch professes to come from God, and a council of men sit in judgment upon it to ascertain whether it really came from God or not. This is like calling a conclave of reptiles to decide whether a letter from the British Government really came from our Cabinet or not. Nay, the difference between a worm or snail and man, the lord of creation, is infinitely smaller than that between the Eternal Trinity and man. If a despatch from God is not patent without judge and jury, how can man weigh the *pros* and *cons.* thereof ? He knows nothing of God, who is past finding out. His ways are not our ways, nor are his thoughts our thoughts. There is nothing tangible to take hold of ; and it is insolent presumption for an ephemeris like man to write "true bill" against what professes to be a Divine revelation. It is no less than blasphemy for any human society to pronounce dogmatically that what professes to come from God really does do so, for they have put it to the test. The Christian Evidence Society sets up for a registry to vindicate the character and verity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Oh, name it not in Gath, nor let the sound reach Ascalon, lest the daughters of Philistia should laugh and the sons of Gath should triumph.

It is unheard-of arrogance, not to use a much harsher word, to sit as judge and jury on the Almighty. God brought into court to be tried and examined by man ? The works of God attested by the authority of human evidence, and needing to be shored by a patent "cumulative" process ? Who gave these self-constituted judges their patent ? Where is the code on which they act ? Whence is the testimony to be gathered ? What is the nature of the evidence in such a trial ? They try Deity as they would try the poems of the boy Chatterton, or the decretals of Isidore. They call in experts to prove the handwriting of Jehovah as they would prove the handwriting of Junius. If Divine, what can human evidence and human knowledge and human testimony avail ? If Divine, how can the evidence of man prove it to be so ? If really Divine, there will be no doubt of its authorship ; if doubtful, it cannot be Divine. If it needs the wisdom of man's wisdom to seal its authenticity, be assured of this, that, like all other books, it is not of heaven, but of earth.

What, in brief, is the question under trial? It is this: Some few centuries ago a vast pile of writings, professing to be inspired, were placed in the hands of a Committee to look over. Out of a mass of rubbish four pamphlets were selected, which the Committee or Council approved of. These four pamphlets they pronounced to be divine, and all the rest they declared to be human forgeries. Stop here. Was the Committee one of gods, or even of angels who had known communion with God? No. Well, were the members of the Committee inspired to judge aright? No. Were they expert in weighing what we should now consider evidence? No. Were they wholly without bias? No; a thousand times no. They had a very strong bias, a very strong *esprit de corps*. That looks ugly. But had they any special means of judging not open to you and me and others? No. Were they learned in all the enormous stores of knowledge which modern science has since accumulated? No. Have all ripe scholars ever since endorsed their judgment? The furthest from it possible. Did all the fathers of the Church agree minutely in their judgment upon these manuscripts? Certainly not, and some parts have been from the very first, and are still, accounted spurious. Do all the disciples accept these books, and these only? No. Are these, then, the books we are blindly to accept? Is this the way a revelation from God is likely to come to man? Are these the good and weighty reasons for believing that the Christian religion is a Divine revelation? Look a little further. The four pamphlets are four memoirs of the same person. The writers of these memoirs are wholly unknown; it is even unknown in what language the memoirs were written, and whether the version which we call the original is the original or only a translation; and, if a translation, who made it—how it can be verified, who is responsible for its fidelity. It is equally uncertain whether our version is part or all, or more than all, of the original; whether the whole is genuine or only a part; and, if a part, what part. It seems demonstrable that some parts are interpolated, and all interpolation casts an ugly suspicion on the whole.

If the name ascribed to the first of these memoirs is correct, it corresponds with one of the Apostles; but, from internal evidence, that memoir is obviously several *brochures* brought together, and the original was called the *Logia*, or sayings. Probably, therefore, it was the Sermon on the Mount, to which were afterwards added the parables. The rest, apparently, was by other hands. In no other way can the chronological confusion be accounted for; in no other way can the title *Logia*, or sayings, be explained. But all is mere conjecture.

The second and third memoirs selected by the wise judges are still more dubious. No such names as Mark and Luke occur among the

apostles or disciples. Who they were nobody knows ; whether Jews or Gentiles nobody knows ; where they lived, when they lived, where they were born, when they died, nobody knows ; when and where their books were written nobody knows ; how they came by the material of their memoirs nobody knows. Did they see the things they set down ? Were they eye-witnesses ? Certainly not. Did they hear the discourses which they reported, and take them down in shorthand on the spot ? Certainly not. Luke distinctly tells us that he compiled his memoir from other memoirs ; but nobody knows anything about these "other memoirs," and certainly they form no part of the sacred selection handed down to us. If Luke depended on them, why in the world have they been rejected ? Are they a part of the waste-paper rubbish cast in the limbo of the moon ? Indeed, it would seem so. Well, but do all the memoirs minutely agree ? Certainly not, parts seem quite irreconcilable, and in other parts there is considerable difference and divergence.

To take one example—one in which it would be morally impossible to err ; one which can admit of no divergence : I mean the genealogy of Jesus, the great central figure. The Jews, it must be remembered, were great sticklers about pedigree. They professed to keep the tables of descent unbroken up to Adam. Now, Matthew and Luke have both given us the pedigree of Jesus, which is as follows :—

<i>Matthew</i>	<i>Luke</i>
Jesus	JESUS
Joseph	Joseph (the husband of Mary)
Jacob	Heli
Matthan	Matthat
Eleazer	Levi
Eliud	Melchi
Achim	Janna
Etc.	Etc.

We need go no further. Of the five predecessors of Joseph only Matthan and Matthat bear the slightest resemblance, and we might have continued the line up to David with no better results.

In regard to the Fourth Gospel, it is so essentially different to the other three that critics agree in placing it much lower down. For my own part, I cannot believe it was extant in the year 160, because Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, who (if Irenæus is to be trusted) was a disciple of John, and died 169, never heard of it, though he compiled a gossipy diary about the apostles, and diligently inquired right and left of every one likely to know for matters connected with them. No one with

whom he came in contact ever heard of the book. Even his friend Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, one of the "angels" addressed in the book of the Revelation, never heard of it, although John was living at Ephesus close by.

This, then, is the strong cable of our popular faith. This rope of sand is all we have for our bower anchor. This is the way that God is supposed to make known his will to man : in four pamphlets picked out from a heap of rubbish by fallible man, biassed and interested—four pamphlets of doubtful genuineness and doubtful authenticity.. It is said to be a revelation essential for men's welfare in time and in eternity ; a revelation of unspeakable moment. One would suppose it would have been diffused like air and light over every region of the globe ; but what is the fact ? It comes slowly from an obscure village in an outlying district of a most insignificant nation, a nation almost unknown to the world at large. And, to make the matter worse, the language itself is neither fish, flesh, nor good red herring. At least 4,000 years had passed before it even dawned on men. It was then hid for some hundreds of years in a mass of spurious documents ; and even at the present moment it is known to only a few.

The great empires of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, and Macedon had all flourished and decayed before it came. The glory of Greece had departed, and Rome was already declining to its fall. China and India, Persia and Arabia, are still ignorant of its existence or reject its claims. We ask if this, on the face of it, looks like a revelation from the God of the whole earth, made to the whole earth, for the immortal interest of the whole earth ? If it comes from God, would it come in this questionable shape ? Would it not carry its credentials open-handed—the seal of its authority as visible as a bull of a pope, or seal of a royal mandate ? It certainly does seem most highly improbable that an essential to the life of all men should be limited to a remote corner, and hid in a box containing deadly poison. It does seem passing strange that God should permit men for 4,000 years to sit in darkness, and when at last he gives them light that he should set his candle under a bushel, in an obscure village, leave it to diffuse as it may, after the bushel itself had been set fire to ; and only after a lapse of many centuries allow it to illumine the world.

Now, for 2,000 years has this candle been burning, and what part of the world has seen it ? A mere fragment. It has shone here and there and gone out ; and it is very doubtful whether it makes any numerical progress at all. The seven Churches of Asia have fallen away ; Egypt has fallen away ; Antioch, where the disciples were first called Christians, has fallen away ; that "Holy Land," which saw the Light of Light itself, has fallen away ; neither Christ himself, nor his college of

apostles, nor his army of disciples, have availed to keep the light burning, though lighted by the Holy Ghost. Such a desperate failure cannot be of God ; such light cannot be from him who is no respecter of persons. It is beyond the bounds of credibility that a wee moth like Mohammed should be able to blow out with its tiny wings the light of heaven ; that a despised rushlight, or wandering bog-fire, should be able to eclipse the sun of the risen day.

JULIAN.

TO MAY.

HAIL ! nymph of fresh and smiling mien,
In daisy-spangled robe of green,
Crowned with a varied flowery wreath,
Thy lips emitting violet breath ;
While in thy hand the blossom'd thorn
Shakes out its essence to the morn.
Thy dimpled feet, with lightsome tread,
Scarce bend the sprouting floweret's head ;
In thy mild eye the tempered ray
Nor chills nor scorches the glad day ;
And thy benignant smile, I wiss,
Gives promise of prospective bliss.

THOMAS MEAD.

AN EVOLUTIONARY REDEMPTION.*

THIS is a book for the tone and purpose of which we have nothing but praise. From many of the author's conclusions, indeed, we take leave to dissent—we may even regard his method of presentation as, at times, questionable; but it is impossible to deny that the argument is placed before us with all honesty of intention, with exceeding brilliancy of conception and of diction, and that the work, as a whole, is an able contribution to the class of literature to which it belongs. Indeed, it is one of the chief charms of this volume that the exquisite grace and delicacy, not of the literary style alone—for that might be artifice—but of the author's mind and heart, so impresses itself, as with absolute limpidity of truthfulness, upon every page that the reader is often compelled to accord his assent to that which, in a cooler moment, he would reject. Almost without marginal note or reference, the current of impassioned language flows on, carrying us with it, until we are fain to turn back from time to time to see to what extent our very silence may have committed us.

In brief, this work may be described as containing the plan of an evolutionary redemption from the consequences of a primal fall. The fall has involved, among other results, the separation of the sexes, originally blended in one perfect form, and also the accretion round the atomic constituents of the earthly body, thus unnaturally divorced from its fellow, of a crust or hull of animal admixture, disguising and debasing an originally plastic, or fluid, and wholly divine nature. The redemption is to be brought about through an overcoming, partly by the human will, partly by the "process of the suns," of the incompleteness of the sexual nature. Earthly desire is to be swallowed up in the embracing of a Divine "Biune" conception—the Sympneuma, the inspiring soul, the God-force, dual in sex; until, "whether the result has given itself or been achieved; whether the waiting or the struggle has proved a matter of days or of decades, the accomplished result, in recent years, in the case of all those people who eliminate from life every desire and pursuit other than to become forms for the highest evolution at present possible for the human being, remains the same;

* "Sympneumata; or, Evolutionary Forces now Active in Man." Edited by Laurence Oliphant. 1 vol. (Blackwood; 1885.)

and, sooner or later, they stand in clear consciousness, as has been said—biune beings before a biune God, in service of the world" (p. 34). The time is not "at hand," but actually come. "This century has been the birth-hour of the full human in men. They become ready now, without and within, for the presence of that God who comes, announcing himself as Father and Mother, two-in-one, showing each human creature to himself as man-woman, and pouring forth through each, in a passion for the collective man-womanhood of earth, that will no longer be arrested nor denied" (p. 33). Dating from the reception of this "dual life-quality from on high," a new sociology is to take its rise; latterly, the "freedom of the enslaved" having been accomplished, the "work of the free" is to begin.

A bald and imperfect summary of the argument such as the above necessarily does injustice to the author. It fails to give any idea, even if it omitted nothing, of the exceeding care with which the theory in question is worked out in detail. The book itself must be read throughout with close attention. From the depth and subtlety of the thought it contains, this volume of 300 pages is hard reading, even for the elect. It is professedly "offered to those only who are genuinely sensible that human life, in all its aspects, presents problems which the general and various lines of thought and action have become inadequate to solve, but from which the mind and spirit of man refuse to turn away." Accordingly, there are many who will rise from its perusal with distaste. Human life with them is, unfortunately, viewed as wholly an open page, the characters legible and the meaning indisputable. With us it is otherwise; so that, in a sense, we commence from the starting-point of the author. It remains to be seen how far we can company with him.

It is evident from the drift of the writer throughout that he has imbibed much of what might be called Spiritualism of the higher type, professedly based upon prolonged psychical research. Again, in postulating for the Supreme Being a biune personality, the theoriser cannot be termed Agnostic. And it is needless to say that, in accepting any primal "fall" or degradation from supernatural blessedness as part of the history of the human race, he goes far beyond what we can grant; and, if there be no lapse, there can be no restoration possible. Curiously enough, also, the animal creation occupies a very subordinate place in the writer's esteem; and, although we cannot affirm that he believes in what may be euphemistically termed "the adversary," yet he does, most distinctly, commit himself to the existence of a crowd of petty adversaries—"spirits of the sub-surface world," their name being Legion, who are continually engaged in a slightly indistinct and, in our opinion, unwarranted conflict with the human race.

But, although much is here to which we cannot subscribe, much also has our frank approval. We have sympathy the most profound in the research such as is here attempted into psychical phenomena. We believe the study to have been unwarrantably neglected. And this although we plainly confess that of every kind of phenomenon we have enough and to spare; it is the *noumenon* we fain would have, were we not debarred. For, after all, that which the writer of "Sympneumata" views as a transcendent revelation now being ushered from the skies is but that which he has garmented with his own ideas and endowed with the sex-distinction of himself and his fellow-creatures. He has made his own deity in his own image, and now bows down before it. Would it were otherwise! for, of the God-hunger which he professes still, we own that we with him have lot and part. "If there is God anywhere, he is in all nature and in every truth." "The human intellect at its greatest has infinitely small dimensions in the presence of world problems, and is a frail and incomplete machinery for gauging the powers that make one human being. Moreover, this little clock-work, at the present day, has overstrained itself seeking to register what is beyond its scope, till a sense of paralysis creeps about it, and it begins to babble of the limits that are set upon all things and all existence by its own relativity."

The sublimest, the profoundest truths do not necessarily form the links of any chain forged by the human mind. Glimpse we may have of that which is divinest verity; but, set as we place it, as one of a connected series, it may be out of position, and we may, therefore, err. So, in the conception of the author of "Sympneumata," that in which the man of earth goes on his way widowed and desolate, because of the "aching void" within left by that disruption of the feminine part of him, there seems to be a glimpse of the truth which we believe ourselves to hold more fully and more clearly (just because we do not mar its simplicity), finding, as we do, in it the eternal craving, unappeased and unappeasable—higher than any self-love, however sublimated—the thirst for that unknowable mystery which has been since the world began. If aught exists higher than ourselves, the higher, to be higher, cannot be pictured in terms borrowed from our own experiences, however elevated, or even from our consciousness. To connect that which "cometh from above," any so-called "Divine descent," with a distinction such as that of sex—one which, however etherealised, has yet been dragged to the lowest hell—were impossible. Reason itself (though the province is not hers) instinctively revolts, and says, No! If higher than ourselves and our own conditions we cannot think, we can, at least, be silent. We need not seek of that which is unknown either its nature or its name, "seeing it is secret."

It may be our fault, and, provisionally, we apologise, but the ending of this book slightly disappoints us. We have become so much accustomed to find a new sociology tacked, like the tale of a kite, to the end of every novel religious theory that we had hoped Mr. Oliphant's book, from the initial promise that it bore, would, in this respect, have agreeably disappointed us. We were glad, after all, to find his social scheme less painfully elaborated than that of the Parisian philosopher. There are certainly no "banners" prescribed, and a new kalendar, to our relief, is not immediately contemplated. To every incipient prophet of a new faith we would say, as a friend, Leave your sociology unplanned ; do not commit yourself in that direction. Let the new revelation, the gospel of to-day, whatever it be, shape its votaries to divineness of life by all means ; but beware of putting down either plan or process on paper.

H. DUNDAS.

SACRED PLACES.

As has been shown in previous papers, certain countries have been regarded as sacred, and even now Palestine is called the Holy Land in consequence of what is said to have transpired there thousands of years ago. A most significant fact and one worthy of notice is that this very soil, so prolific of religion, has been comparatively barren of science, philosophy, and education. Mecca, to the Mohammedan, is still a holy place, and sacred pilgrimages to it are considered highly meritorious in the sight of God, and greatly beneficial to the pilgrims. Here, again, we have a superstition underlying which there is a truth based in human nature. We are all hero-worshippers, more or less, and we are apt to prize everything connected with our heroes—the places in which they lived, the haunts they frequented, the scenes they loved to gaze upon, and whatever is associated with their names and memories. Upon this principle a room, a piece of furniture, a book, or any object may become sacred—that is, in the sense in which Agnostics use the word. We visit Stratford-on-Avon because it was the birthplace of Shakespeare ; we love to gaze upon the old home of Milton in the City of London, to follow Johnson up the Court that

bears his name, or seat ourselves in the chair of Bede at Jarrow-upon-Tyne. These things become sacred to us, and we prize them accordingly. All this can be easily understood, because it accords with human nature. On the same principle, we do not object to the veneration which the Mohammedan bestows upon Mecca, or the Christian upon Nazareth or Calvary.

But with religious people the matter does not rest here. Not only do they hold places to be sacred in consequence of what is supposed to have happened in them in the past, but they endeavour to invest modern places and buildings with a pseudo-sacred character by a ceremony which is nothing but a piece of mummery, as meaningless as it is absurd. A church, for instance, is termed a sacred building. Now, if that simply meant that it was set apart for a particular purpose, no one need raise the least objection, even though the purpose might be one with which we entirely disagreed, and to which we felt called upon to offer our strongest opposition in the interest of humanity at large. But with the Christian and other religionists it means very much more than this. A bishop of the Church of England goes through a certain ceremony called consecration, in which prayers are offered and forms complied with of a strictly religious character, and the building becomes transformed into a holy temple, totally unlike what it was before. The very stones are sacred now, and cannot be used for another purpose without profanation. A layman, however pure and unsullied his moral character, however great his intellectual attainments, however profound his erudition, however extensive his acquirements, however unquestionable his piety, is not allowed to address the congregation in that building, because it is sacred, and he does not belong to the sacred order. Nay, more, a Nonconformist minister stands in exactly the same position, although in learning, in character, and even in the religious life, he may be a thousand times the superior of the parson who regularly officiates. Only those who, having been episcopally ordained, have become themselves sacred dare open their mouths in the sacred edifice. Can anything in the world be more absurd? Is it not derogatory to man and an insult to human genius? What possible effect upon bricks and stones and mortar and cement can the words of a bishop have? And yet modern professors of theology stand aghast at the folly displayed by Pagan worshippers. It would be exceedingly interesting to have the *modus operandi* of this process of making such things sacred explained to us—to be told what is the nature of the conversion they undergo, and in what sense they differ after consecration from their condition before.

Worse still, the same piece of theological legerdemain is practised in our burial grounds. These, too, must be consecrated—that is, made

sacred, or sacred bones, it is feared, could not quietly rest in them. In cemeteries part of the ground is generally consecrated, and part left in its usual state. The physical difference—and there can be no spiritual, for it will not be maintained that mould is capable of spiritual impressions—that has been effected by this process is more puzzling than the Athanasian Creed. How deep down does the consecration extend? And does it cover any clods of earth that might afterwards be brought to the spot, but which were not there at the time the ceremony was performed? Is the grass that will hereafter grow also consecrated? And, if so, what will be the effect of the eating of said grass upon the bodies of unconsecrated cattle? Shall we get, as a result, consecrated beef and mutton?

But, in all seriousness, what is consecrated ground? And what power has priest or bishop or pope, by the reciting of any form of words, to accomplish anything of the kind? One of our poets has well written, as a rebuke to these miserable superstitions :—

“ What’s hallowed ground? ’Tis what gives birth
To sacred thoughts in souls of worth.
Peace ! Independence ! Truth ! Go forth
Earth’s compass round,
And your high priesthood shall make earth
All hallowed ground.”

This is the true consecration, the real making holy ; for not by ridiculous ceremony, but by noble thoughts, is everything hallowed and made sacred on earth.

CHARLES WATTS.

!

A.D. 2500.

ANTIPODEAN AGNOSTICISM: ITS WHENCE AND ITS WHITHER.

CHAPTER V.

“A bit of faithful work that will perhaps remain like a primrose root in the hedgerow, and gladden and chasten human hearts in years to come.”

—GEORGE ELIOT (*Journal*, 1857).

Most startling of all the epigrammatic sayings of Josiah Crimes were those in which he identified himself with the primeval and original force of the universe. Somewhere about 1885 meditative people used to express the enormous debt which they owed to a great philosopher for his lucid formulation of that vast power which merges itself, behind and in front, in the abysmal gulf of human ignorance. Crimes was too sympathetic to be bookish, and chiefly given to oral teaching; but he loved to picture this unrealisable force as the *Alma Mater*, the tender nursing mother of all things. Those who did not trouble about the reconciliation, the atonement of phenomena—who found plenty in their farms, their merchandise, and their women-folk to occupy them—voted his language blasphemous; *they* concerned themselves with the decimal figures, rather than with the grand sum-total of the world's arithmetic. He spoke of himself as “a son of the Mother,” a phrase in which his flatterers substituted a definite article. And surely we may more respectfully treat the nerve-ganglia of the world, where mystic messages are generated and distributed, than the rubbishy, half-dead, epidermal scales which the first soaping will wash from remembrance. “Your Mother knows what things you want before you ask her,” he would say, thinking, perhaps, of the pre-ordained affinity of oxygen for the refuse carbon of our bodies, or the automatic action of the diaphragm. “It is not the will of the distant Mother that one of these youngsters should perish,” noticing on what excessively short commons the City Arabs still managed to cut their capers in the gutters of Sydney. “The genial Mother herself wills that you should possess the Antipodes.” “In talking to you as I do I am actuated by no petty

individualistic pride. I am but the spokesman of the universal Parent." "The men who persecute me persecute the Mother herself." "Ah. Best of Parents, the world has not read your gaze aright; but I, I was privileged; and these few, they too have watched for your kindly beckonings."

A scene which took place shortly before his death was, perhaps, the most striking of the many picturesque *tableaux* of which he himself was so large a part. On his last visit to the Observatory, where he had ever been a welcome visitor, he had taken a last long and lingering look at the green seas, the white polar fields, and ruddy continents of Mars. In spite of dimming eyes, the instrument seemed to acquire a deeper and a clearer definition. He thought he could even discern inhabitants, and that they possessed attributes of wisdom infinitely greater than ourselves. Was it not possible, too, to distinguish gestures? Might it not be that they were thus displaying anxiety to lead us in the higher, the happier way? Hurriedly, for he was on the brink of another existence, he bade his children in the faith—the faith in the beneficence of Nature, if you listen to her teaching—to take a hasty glimpse, and urged them on to a more careful inspection when he should be no more. "You will think of me," he said, in kindly tones, "as often as you look through your telescopes." He went, say the historians, through a similar ceremony with his microscope, and, in the wriggings of infinitesimal bacteria, proclaimed the Mother's kindly satire on human strivings to get at the truth, the absolute truth, and nothing but the truth. Commentators, however, incline to think that the latter instrument was introduced into the records subsequently, and for the sake of symmetry; and that, for a dying man, the story shows too great an attention to detail.

It was not wonderful that the annual dinner, started by the enthusiastic disciples in order to keep alive the memory of their passionately-loved friend, was a happy success. Those, too, who have studied the extremes to which human nature will proceed will not be much surprised to hear that, later on, a daily commemoration dinner became *de rigueur* for the ultra-enthusiasts. True, instead of remaining solid and substantial, it dwindled into a pale ghost of a meal, requiring to be supplemented with common-sense rations by common-sense people. But, at the first institution of the Old Boys' dinner, so many kindly, genial souls were gathered together, so honest were these in their outspokenness, so tender in their treatment of the weak, so resolute in preferring the distant profits of truth to the immediate advantages of make-believe, that none left the circle without feeling cheered and braced. And when these friends passed through the stage of mutual exhilaration to external activity, so much were their services appreciated that the people clustered round

them and ensured the continuance of these services by ministering to their wants. There was usually one such teacher in each large town. And when his activity had fairly worn itself out (for the Nemesis of warm emotion and honest enthusiasm is not always to be avoided), there were ever large landowners up country ready to afford him a peaceful asylum and occupation, in the teaching of the young and the guidance of the ignorant, less wearing for voice and brain than urban wrestling. These Bush stations came to be known as parishes, and as population increased they became coterminous.

We who have learned to hate shams, whose ready suspicions are roused by whatsoever formeth or fashioneth a lie, who laugh at ancient, padded gentlemen whose whiskers are blue at the tips and hoary at the roots, shall we regret or deny that Australia became old? Is not the world outside the looking-glass in a state of perpetual and wholesome rejuvenescence, which is better than clinging to broken-down cradles? Has science, which hints something of the passage from the inorganic to the organic, nothing to say, sociologically as well as biologically, of the passage of the organic onwards? Yes, Australia went through the usual stages, and, in spite of Tasmanian growls for Home Rule, and questionable loyalty on the part of New Zealand, attained, in due course, to the proud title of the United Australian Presidency. And when the inhabitants, teeming under favour of good government, threw themselves into their Borneo, Papuan, and Malay Colonies, and, by the varying methods of trade, missionaries, and torpedo boats, temporarily controlled large tracts of immiscible races, it was, of course, very desirable to integrate the whole under the title of the Antipodean Supremacy, finding itself, in turn and internally, at the mercy of Socialists, Humanitarians, and Democrats, who rode their hobby of Universal Integration even to absurdity.

W. GREATHEED.

(To be concluded.)

NOTES AND SCRAPS.

OUR readers will observe from our advertisement pages that we have in the press the leaflets and pamphlets the early publication of which was announced in the circular enclosed in our last issue. We earnestly appeal to our friends to co-operate with us in our endeavours to disseminate the teachings of Agnosticism. The work we have undertaken is by no means an easy one, and we need the cordial and hearty support of all sympathisers. The best service that can be rendered us is the judicious distribution of the leaflets and pamphlets, and that can be effected at a comparatively small outlay. Through the generous support of readers of this magazine, we have during the past month despatched several hundred copies of the *Agnostic* to probable subscribers, with the most gratifying results. If those who approve of our aim and policy steadfastly aid us, immediate and assured success must attend our efforts. We hope shortly to announce the issuing of further and important publications expository of Agnosticism; but our work must necessarily be limited by the financial and other support extended to our labours.

If for no other reason than that it is before us, let us not shun the task of to-day. Manliness and hardihood forbid the craven surrender of idleness. Let us not wait to be urged, in order to do our best, nor let us pause after we have done it, to listen for the "well done" of any approving voice. There is a crouching type of manhood now-a-days which seeks to conceal its own baseness by loudly applauding every rightly-performed and self-denying act. He who perishes in the path of duty is—with this shrieking disciple—at least a martyr. A generous deed, beautiful in its spontaneity, is dragged to the daylight and trumpeted abroad, as if all virtue and nobility had been dead and newly come to life again. A single-hearted Puritan soldier dies as he lived, in his duty; he was the last even to listen to praise; yet now, in that he fell faithfully, the world itself shall not contain the tracts to be therefore written.

The average nineteenth-century Englishman, leaving behind him a creed which, whatever its faults, has not, at least, debased him, steps at once into the air of thought-liberty, expecting to enjoy his new-found freedom. What the result is we know sufficiently well. It is much the same as in the case of one till late in life immersed in business, who finds its abandonment bringing him only vacuity. It could scarcely be otherwise in either case. Were he content—this man who leaves his faith—simply to be as he is, the creature of an older fashion born into a newer world, it were well; but he cannot hope to change that which

has become part of his intellectual and moral being, as in a moment, because his thoughts in certain relations have been altered. If he has been Theist, then Theist, in part, he will be to the close. He cannot be wholly Agnostic.

Some talk, and truly, of a "wayside sacrament" in the fair face of childhood, in the field floweret, and in every haunt and nook of Nature's path. But, as every sacrament hath outer and inner parts, we often find those who profess to reverence the inner sanctity to be mere sentimental admirers of the outward form. A Materialistic rapture is theirs, which is only a keen relish for, and a delight in, beauty of form and grace of fashion. He who rightly discerns hath the gift of this, and more. He knows the wistfulness of violet and primrose; but he has, also, found a deeper lesson in their simple blooms than Science or Art can teach him, and is thus twice blest. When any one speaks of a significance existing to him in nature—of a share which is his—

"In all the pomp that fills
The circuit of the summer hills,"

he is either exceeding wise, or simply a lover of deftly-blent colour and fragrance. In the latter case the higher touches him not. He is content with a refined animal delight, and partakes not—save grossly—of any sacrament.

There is an agony of suffering in that lingering doubt which haunts the human soul in the beginnings of disbelief. Hopes, long cherished, have soothed many an hour of pain and reconciled us to Death itself—in the assurance they afford that the familiar faces of the departed shall hereafter be seen by us again, cleansed from the "dishonours of the grave." The turning-point, when these ministering hopes, one by one, begin to show as fond delusions, then re-assert themselves, only to grow dim and fade once more, includes the darkest hours of human life. Some escape, through sheer dulness, all that sore agony. Some escape by still hoping against hope. Others pass through the torment, and bear the traces of its ardent fires.

We wish, charitably, to curtail, as far as possible, the limits of a teacher's responsibility for the errors of his teaching, so he be sincere in thought and pure in life and word. There is a propaganda, however, for the infinite evil results of which the teacher must be held fully accountable. It is that of the persistent mocker of his newly-quitted Christian belief. The results are two-fold. First, on the man's own mental fibre, thus deadened and outraged; the production, in himself, of the empty sadness, of jaded merriment, intermittent in its expression, as if broken in upon with remembrance of the shameful words which shall not be blotted evermore. Second—and this is eternal—a thought-harvest, a habit ineradicable in others, of utter vileness in mind and heart, for all that is noble therein has been scorched as with living flame. He who thinks that he enjoys literature of this description, and

seeks to spread it, goes towards his own sure destruction and aids in the destruction of others.

When we find any church, sect, or society in the current literature of which these words are freely paraded—truth, virtue, self-sacrifice, nobleness, purity, and the like, we may assuredly know that from its midst all these things have utterly departed long before. Only the names remain. If present, they would not be spoken of. Openly to parade such virtues by name is to show their dwelling-place deserted. A noble faith never names itself noble, nor a pure one pure.

To know a man thoroughly—to discern whether, in his heart of hearts, he be godlike or brutish—seek for his unstudied comment, not upon religion, not upon life, pleasure, or fashion, but upon *death*; and you will straightway learn what manner of man he is—that is to say, provided your own thoughts of that last agony be noble, and not vile.

He is guilty of blasphemy who revileth aught of the great feast of Life, or any who sit down thereat thankfully and reverently. That which is set before us is, in itself, good; only those who think evilly have said otherwise, and from an evident motive. The bread and wine of life will nourish and cheer us, and are, in every way, sufficient for us and for all our needs. More we seek not, nor do we ask too curiously to discern the nature of that inner consecration whereby our daily food for the body is soul-food as well. The shew-bread will satisfy hunger, and be none the less true nourishment because of its sacredness.

That change of thought is, verily, worthy of the name of a “new birth” when one is, for the first time, conscious that this game with painted cards called “life” is not a pastime simply, not a task, but an insistent occupation, worthy of all our endeavour, all our activity, and our enjoyment—none the less in that the symbols passed from hand to hand stand for that which we know not; that the stakes are souls and bodies, the hazard high, and the issues unknowable.

It is the same in the new faith as in the old. He which is filthy is filthy still, and righteousness is righteousness yet. A man may not cheat or lie and be of the household of the true in heart, whether the household be called Christian or Agnostic.

ERRATUM.—Last month, on p. 146, “without such” was inadvertently printed “without gush.”

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"Agnosticism simply means that a man shall not say he knows or believes that which he has no scientific grounds for professing to know or believe.....Agnosticism says that we know nothing of what may be beyond phenomena."—PROF. HUXLEY.

"I think that generally (and more and more as I grow older), but not always, an Agnostic would be the more correct description of my state of mind."—CHARLES DARWIN.

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THE AGNOSTIC.

JUNE, 1885.

THE PERFECT LIFE.

"THE conclusion of the whole matter" is, as a rule, possessed of much interest in the view both of preacher and hearer. The former hopes to carry conviction to the hearts of the dumbest with an impassioned peroration; the listener expects the final "practical application," either from a laudable desire to know the truth at issue in all its bearings, or from an excusable wish to be no longer lectured. Perhaps the sum of that which has, in this place of these pages, been stated in regard to Agnosticism may now be put in few words before passing to some other aspects of the subject.

The mental conclusion of most persons in regard to any novel theorising generally takes this prosaic form—What does it profit? And although, in matters of the highest importance, this may seem to be a somewhat low ground for us to adopt in the decision of acceptance or rejection, there is more to be said in favour of such a cautious provision than appears at first sight. If the truth is to be bought, and on no account to be re-sold, the price thereof is evidently a question not to be avoided. Everything (folly excepted) has a market value, real or nominal; and anything proving useless sinks to the foot of the price list, and is only quotable in cyphers. Our Agnostic Secularism cannot escape this inevitable condition. Unless it will "wear well," and fit the need as well as "hit the mood of men on earth," the sooner it descends to oblivion the better. An appreciable portion of time, which cannot prudently be wasted, will be devoted to its consideration. Is it worth the hour thus spent? Will it help us all, or any one of us? Is it worthy of the thought of a moment or of a lifetime? And the answer to these queries will be found on applying Agnostic Secularism, or Secular Agnosticism (the order is immaterial, the values being equal), to

admitted and familiar difficulties, and "breaches of continuity" in corporate and individual existence, in order to ascertain if, in any way, this theory of ours will remove the former or repair the latter. Anything possesses value to a greater or less extent if it will supply a blank, or fill a place which otherwise were vacant. If thus justified, our "creed of existence" will possess to us a double authority. Convinced as we are of its truthfulness and reasonableness, we shall also be assured of its usefulness.

Models of human excellence are apt to be disappointing. We are told to mark the perfect man and to behold his uprightness. The chief difficulty is to find him. Sufficient will be his renown when he reveals himself. As, in the story, the shirt of the perfectly happy man could not be found to form a garment for the hapless king, the only happy man discoverable not possessing a shirt, so the element of perfectness constantly eludes us. The pathetic lament is ever applicable, "there is always a something." Imperfection seems the law, with no permitted exceptions. If there be no flaw in the jewel itself, then the setting is tawdry. Where shall wisdom be found, and where the place of understanding?

What is the meaning of this? We try to suggest an explanation founded on the special defectiveness of some examples proffered to us as perfect. Some fall short in one respect, some in another. The loving husband, the affectionate parent, the exemplary citizen, the steadfast friend, seems irreproachable. What is his fault, since faults are inevitable? Perhaps such an one is a trifle overmuch bound up in these sole relationships; is a man with no margin of character beyond them, no breadth of feeling, no play of imagination. He is everything that could be wished in all respects that can be named; but the truth is he is narrowed and hampered just because his excellences can be so readily catalogued. Then, on the other hand, we have one dowered with every gift of genius; the godlike fire is his, a wealth of phantasy and imagination is lavished upon him; and, almost inevitably, how wholly unpractical, how unfit for the strain and stress of life-duty, and for that insistent choice which must be made by every one daily, if not hourly! Imagination, poetry, mysticism, the light from heaven, all conspire to lead astray and to breed infirmity of resolution and purpose. Such a man, like Shelley, will choose a dwelling because the rooms are papered with roses, and be otherwise and always a laggard in the conflict of the actual.

Do we not wish, viewing these types singly, that it were possible to join together the qualities of each, and thereby to make one new and wholly perfect man? The one is too much the Secularist, the other overmuch an Agnostic. And just because Secular Agnosticism is

the true ideal to be striven after do we wish to blend together their representative instances. Secularism is the essential basis, and any attempt to ignore that necessary foundation is foolishness. The only question is, how far shall the Secularism be pushed? We wish to know when to stop being Secularists, in order that the supplement of Secularism may have its place. So much is Secularism; the rest is mainly silence, the eloquence of Agnosticism.

There must be some disposition and behaviour, bodily and mental, which is the only just and the only true one for us *now*; the sole truth and righteousness of the instant; the attitude and action of body, soul, and spirit supremely fit. Evolution produces, in the slow years, a bodily type born to excel and to survive. May not a less painful process produce, after all, a mental perfection of fitness, a mind alike suited and suitable; a calm and serene temper, moulded by surroundings infinite, conscious of its power, conscious also (yet not ashamed) of its impotency in certain fields;—so that, in the end, it may be affirmed and known for a truth that, in habit of body and mood of spirit, there can relatively be *no better*? The dweller is fit for his infinite, boundless dwelling, and finds in it his glad, familiar home.

We have said before, and need not here repeat the argument, that the known (including the knowable) and the unknowable constitute together our sole environment. What need, then, in order to ensure perfect adaptation throughout, for aught else than accommodation on our part to the necessities of the former, and (since nothing more is possible) a consciousness of the latter? Such a consciousness, such an acknowledgment of the unknowable, is, upon the face of it, part of the scheme and plan of life. We cannot avoid it, or legitimately pick and choose the knowable alone, and say that we will render obedience and be willing servants to obey knowable law only. There is something more, written in unspeakable characters on the face of every flower, on the dust of every grave; and, although of its hidden meaning we can know nothing, we shall only act falsely if we deny its existence. Only by an outrage of our highest and deepest feelings can such a denial be uttered. The poorest among us strives, sometimes unconsciously and with pathetic wistfulness, to retain some small plot of earth which may be sacred ground. Every one of us tries to rescue from the highway of life that which will serve as a garden of the soul. There is perhaps nothing more significantly eloquent than the misplaced, yet sincere, desire which prompts those who have left a Theistic faith to seek for something which may be to them at once source and ocean of that impulse which inly stirs them. Nothing that is seen, felt, or known has ever satisfied this inner want; no earthly fount has ever slaked that divinest thirst. What if we own it, grant its existence, and admit that

its essence and purpose consists in its being insatiable? This notice and admission does not, at least, attempt to remove a difficulty by ignoring it.

Our model of rightful living is thus definitely two-fold. What is our conduct in relation thereto? Few of us need much instruction in order to become admirable Secularists. Sermons on the Secular life are in the stones at our feet. Something is rather needed to restrain us in this respect, and to prevent us from degenerating into Materialistic Utilitarians. That corrective influence Agnosticism supplies, with its purifying and ennobling precepts. There is no higher type of manhood, none more exalted, than his who is at once master of Earth's knowledge and servant of Life's mysteries.

G. M. McC.

THE MEMORY OF PAST JOY.

THERE is a soft and soothing power,
 When calling back the memory fair
 Of some sweet spot or some bright hour
 In which the moments golden were,
 That make associations sweet,
 Combine to leave a spell behind
 No after-world's mishaps you meet
 Can cancel in the grateful mind.

As some choice foil, or rarer fern,
 The herbal's virgin leaves compress,
 To which in later times we turn
 To contemplate their loveliness ;
 Though quelled by time their verdant tint,
 Their forms of beauty still remain,
 And their suggestive shows reprint
 The memory with joy again.

Then let the flowers, and not the weeds,
 The sunshine, not the shadow, cling,
 The kindly word, the gracious deed,
 In our remembrances to bring ;
 Renewal of the pristine charm
 That they imparted to the mind,
 To keep the spirit fresh and warm,
 To cheerfulness and good inclined.

THOMAS MEAD.

HERBERT SPENCER'S PHILOSOPHY: AN EXPOSITION.

VI.

"FIRST PRINCIPLES."

THE KNOWABLE: DEFINITIONS AND DATA.

WITH the present paper we commence a study of Part II. of "First Principles." Among the subjects with which this Part deals are (1) The Data of Philosophy; (2) Space, Time, Matter, Motion, and Force; (3) Evolution and Dissolution; (4) Simple and Compound Evolution; (5) The Law of Evolution; (6) The Interpretation of Evolution; and (7) Segregation.

Within the scope of this Second Part are included all those highest scientific generalisations which hold true not only of one class of phenomena, but of *all* classes; and it will therefore form a complete statement of the principles discernible throughout all manifestations of the Unknowable.

Setting out from the conclusion recently reached, that the Knowable, in all its forms, is a manifestation of the Unknowable, we are now in a position to frame a permanent definition of Agnosticism. As far as we know, the task of framing such a definition has never yet been performed, if, indeed, it has ever been seriously attempted. The only attempt which has met with any degree of success is the effort of Professor Huxley,* and even the negative success achieved by him is so slight as to be hardly distinguishable from positive failure.

Professor Huxley's definition runs thus: "Agnosticism simply means that a man shall not say he knows or believes that which he has no scientific grounds for professing to know or believe." As a sort of supplement to this definition, the Professor adds: "Agnosticism says that we know nothing of what may be beyond phenomena." To our thinking, this definition, though the best that has been framed, is in many respects bad. Besides being glaringly incomplete, it is philosophically inaccurate; and it is inaccurate because it is incomplete.

* *Vide* "The Agnostic Annual," 1884.

Why is the definition philosophically incomplete? Because, instead of expressing a *product* of thought, it expresses a *process* of thought. Agnosticism is not a particular process by which we arrive at a certain conclusion (although, of course, it *includes* every process), but it is the conclusion itself; not a single mental act, but the *resultant* of all mental acts. Hence any definition of Agnosticism, to be really philosophical, must express an ultimate truth, and not an act of thought, or a series of acts of thought, by which an ultimate truth is reached. Since Professor Huxley's definition does not do this, it is fundamentally faulty.

But there is a second serious defect in this definition. It is negative where it might be, and should be, positive. It involves not the *presence*, but the *absence*, of a piece of knowledge—denies something, but affirms nothing; and so, while doing little towards popularising Agnosticism, does much towards perpetuating a misconception of Agnosticism. That Agnosticism is essentially constructive cannot be too frequently or too distinctly insisted upon; and any definition which ignores this fact must be repudiated without mercy.

Professor Huxley's supplementary definition contains the same fault in another form. To say that "we know nothing of what *may be* beyond phenomena" implies that beyond phenomena there *may be* nothing. The basic principle of Agnosticism, as we have all along argued, is not that there *may be*, but that necessarily there *must be*, something beyond phenomena. Effect without cause, phenomenon without noumenon, are unthinkable.

Having rejected as imperfect Professor Huxley's definition, the question arises, Is it possible to formulate a definition which shall be perfect? A perfect definition, it is clear, must exclude, not only the imperfections to which we have alluded, but also the subtlest assaults of logic and the keenest cuts of criticism. Such a definition we have here: *Agnosticism is completely-unified knowledge of the manifestations of the Unknowable.* This proposition, so far from involving a negation—so far from constituting a confession of ignorance—includes and consolidates all knowledge. In order to be quite sure that our definition is neither insufficient nor redundant, neither too wide nor too narrow, let us subject it to the crucial test of a rigorous analysis.

The two terms in our predicate are *completely-unified knowledge* and *manifestations of the Unknowable*, the latter term containing the two factors, *manifestations* and *Unknowable*. That the Unknowable exists is, as we found in the last section, a truth beyond cavil—not merely a certainty, but the most certain of all certainties, since it cannot be expelled from the mind. It follows, therefore, that our highest knowledge—and, indeed, our only knowledge—has to do with the *manifestations* of this Ultimate Existence. As the Supreme Cause is

beyond the reach of our intelligence, we can know the effects only ; as noumenon transcends our sphere, our knowledge is confined to phenomena ; and, as the Power which manifests itself is unknowable, our philosophy consists exclusively of *manifestations*. When these manifestations are known only apart, and are regarded as independent of one another, they constitute knowledge of the lowest order—Common Sense, or ununified knowledge. When they are known conjointly, and are considered in their various relations to one another, they constitute knowledge of a higher order—Science, or partially-unified knowledge. And when, having been reduced to a few universal laws, which are contemplated together as corollaries of an ultimate truth, these manifestations constitute knowledge of the highest order—completely-unified knowledge, or Philosophy. Philosophy, therefore, is the name for knowledge of the greatest degree of generality ; Science for knowledge of a smaller degree of generality ; and Common Sense for knowledge of the smallest degree of generality. Let us illustrate.

Here we have 1½ cubic inches of ice, one cubic inch of water, and 1,700 cubic inches of steam. A common-sense man will regard them separately—the first as a solid, the second as a liquid, and the third as a gas ; and he will see only what he deems three totally different things, having no properties in common. His knowledge of the objects is knowledge of details merely.

A second man—a scientist—looks at the same things. He finds not simply that they have numerous common properties, but that they are all composed of the same substance, in varying states ; that the ice weighs 252½ grains, the water into which it is changed weighs 252½ grains, and the steam produced from the water weighs 252½ grains ; that the same force would cause the ice, the water, and the steam to move with exactly the same rapidity, having precisely the same effect upon anything against which they struck ; and that each decomposes into no more and no less than 28½ grains of hydrogen, with 224½ grains of oxygen. Uniting this large number of particular facts, the chemist generalises from them the great truth that, chemically, ice, water, and steam—solid, liquid, and gas—not only have many properties in common, but are absolutely identical. This is knowledge of a greater degree of generality than that possessed by the common-sense man.

Finally, these three modes of matter are viewed by a third person—a philosopher. He takes the general truth arrived at by the chemist, and joins it with other general truths deduced from other sciences ; and from this integration of general truths the philosopher evolves the universal truth that Matter, in all its modes—including ice and water and steam, mineral and vegetal and animal, organic and inorganic—affects 'us in terms of Force, and is a

manifestation of the Unknowable. This is knowledge of the highest degree of generality.*

Hence we see that what Science is to Common Sense, Philosophy is to Science. "The truths of Philosophy bear the same relation to the highest scientific truths that each of these bears to lower scientific truths. As each widest generalisation of Science comprehends and consolidates the narrower generalisations of its own division, so the generalisations of Philosophy comprehend and consolidate the widest generalisations of Science. It is, therefore, a knowledge of the extreme opposite in kind to that which experience first accumulates. It is the final product of that process which begins with a mere colligation of crude observations, goes on establishing propositions that are broader and more separated from particular cases, and ends in universal propositions. Or to bring the definition to its simplest and clearest form :— Knowledge of the lowest kind is *un-unified* knowledge ; Science is *partially-unified* knowledge ; Philosophy is *completely-unified* knowledge."

Manifestly, then, our definition of Agnosticism as *completely-unified knowledge of the manifestations of the Unknowable* is from all points perfectly unassailable.

If, now, all Philosophy has for its object the unification of knowledge, in what respect does the Agnostic Philosophy differ from other philosophies ? Clearly in this : that its greatest generalisation, its ultimate interpretation of the universe, is different from that propounded by any other philosophy. To the vast question, What is that *invariable existence* of which all phenomena are *variable states* ? sundry philosophies have given sundry replies. From the days of Pythagoras and earlier, to the days of Comte and later, no answer save that of the Synthetic System has been satisfactory. As the Invariable Existence, one philosophy has Water ; a second has Fire ; a third, Air ; a fourth, Number ; and a fifth,† nothing at all. So that, while all other philosophies assign for phenomena either an adequate noumenon or no noumenon whatever, the Agnostic Philosophy declares noumenon to be unknowable. Here it is that Agnosticism is immensely different from all other systems, and here it is that Agnosticism is immensely superior to them.

We have dwelt at length upon this definition of Agnosticism because it is of the very first importance that an impregnable proposition should be constructed and established—a formula that can be defended at all times and against all invaders. We pass now from definition to data.

* For a verification of the scientific statements here made *vide* Professor Huxley's excellent little "Introductory Science Primer."

† The "Philosophie Positive" deals exclusively with phenomena (the effect), and recognises nothing underlying phenomena (the cause).

The data of the Agnostic Philosophy are necessarily of a psychological nature.

One of the primordial facts of Philosophy is *the declaration of consciousness that certain of its states are similar and certain of them dissimilar*. Regarding all things knowable as manifestations of the Unknowable, we are compelled to accept as true the deliverance of consciousness that some of these manifestations are like one another, and some unlike one another. Were we to repudiate consciousness as a competent judge of the congruities and the incongruities of its states, we could never establish either that similarity throughout the whole range of thought which constitutes Philosophy, or that dissimilarity by which alone any theory is proved to be unphilosophical. Nay more. Every grade in the reasoning-process takes for granted that consciousness is a competent judge. "To say that all things of a certain class are characterised by a certain attribute is to say that all things known as *like* in those various attributes connoted by their common name are also *like* in having the particular attribute specified. To say that some object of immediate attention belongs to this class is to say that it is *like* all the others in the various attributes connoted by their common name. To say that this object possesses the particular attribute specified is to say that it is *like* the others in this respect. While, contrariwise, the assertion that the attribute thus inferred to be possessed by it, is not possessed, implies the assertion that in place of one of the alleged *likenesses* there exists an *unlikeness*. Neither affirmation nor denial, therefore, of any deliverance of reason, or any element of such deliverance, is possible without accepting the dictum of consciousness that certain of its states are like or unlike. Whence, besides seeing that the unified knowledge constituting a completed Philosophy is a knowledge composed of parts that are universally congruous, and besides seeing that it is the business of Philosophy to establish their universal congruity, we also see that every act of the process by which the universal congruity is to be established, down even to the components of every inference and every observation, consists in the establishment of congruity." As a consequence, when consciousness delivers a verdict as to the existence of a congruity or of an incongruity, that verdict must be taken as unimpeachable and as final—as a judgment from which, in the nature of the case, there can be no appeal. "And here we get at the bottom of the matter. The permanence of a consciousness of likeness or difference is our ultimate warrant for asserting the existence of likeness or difference ; and, in fact, we mean by the existence of likeness or difference nothing more than the permanent consciousness of it. To say that a given congruity or incongruity exists is simply our way of saying that we invariably have a consciousness of it along with a consciousness of the compared things.

We know nothing more of existence than a continued manifestation." Nor do we know anything more of this manifestation than an effect of the Unknowable Cause.

But this datum of the Agnostic Philosophy requires another datum as its complement. What is true of the definitions of Agnosticism is true of the data of Agnosticism : neither can be composed exclusively of a certain *method*, but to each a certain *conclusion* is necessary. To admit as unimpeachable some primary *process* of consciousness is not sufficient. We must admit as unimpeachable some primary *product* of consciousness. Since Philosophy is completely-unified knowledge, and since knowledge can be unified only by the formation of an ultimate proposition on which comprehends and consolidates all the results of experience, it follows that this final proposition, which is in agreement with all other propositions, must represent a piece of knowledge, and not merely the validity of a knowing-process.

The second proposition required as a datum of the Agnostic Philosophy is, therefore, the proposition that *the manifestations of the Unknowable are divisible into two great classes—the one embracing all subjective phenomena, and the other all objective phenomena*. This datum affirms the most profound distinction which things present, being a complete statement of similarities and dissimilarities wider and deeper than any other statement. This is an assertion of the ultimate principle which is concerned not with experiences of one order, not with experience of one group of orders, but with experience of all orders. A principle which is to unify all knowledge must be co-extensive with all knowledge, and must assert some fundamental congruity and incongruity in which all other congruities and incongruities merge. Such a principle is contained in the above-given datum.

Starting from our postulate that all things known are manifestations of the Unknowable, let us take a cursory glance at the two vast classes into which these manifestations are grouped. The first class we call *vivid* manifestations (*impressions*), and the second *faint* manifestations (*ideas*). Briefly stated, the several main characteristics which distinguish the *vivid* manifestations from the *faint* are these : Manifestations "of the one order are originals, while those of the other order are copies. The first form with one another a series, or heterogeneous current, that is never broken ; and the second also form with one another a parallel series or current that is never broken ; or, to speak more strictly, no breakage of either is ever directly known. Those of the first order cohere with one another, not only longitudinally, but also transversely ; as do also those of the second order with one another. Between manifestations of the first order the cohesions, both longitudinal and transverse, are indissoluble ; but between manifestations of the second order

these cohesions are most of them dissoluble with ease. While the members of each series or current are so coherent with one another that the current cannot be broken, the two currents, running side by side as they do, have but little coherence—the great body of the vivid current is absolutely unmodifiable by the faint, and the faint may become almost separate from the vivid. The conditions under which manifestations of either order occur, themselves belong to that order; but, whereas in the faint order the conditions are always present, in the vivid order the conditions are often not present, but lie somewhere outside of the series."

Obviously, this grouping of the manifestations of the Unknowable into *vivid* and *faint* corresponds to the division between *object* and *subject*; and this deepest of distinctions among these manifestations we recognise by classing into *self* and *not-self*. The *ego* is constituted by the totality of the faint manifestations, and the *non-ego* by the totality of the vivid manifestations. Or, to speak more rigidly, each order of manifestations necessarily involves some power which manifests itself; and while by the term *ego* we signify that power as manifested in faint forms, by the term *non-ego* we signify the same power as manifested in vivid forms.

These aggregated conceptions find their explanation in the fundamental law of thought which transcends all appeal. The permanent consciousness of likeness and difference is a consciousness which forces itself upon us, and makes itself accepted simply because it *is* permanent. It is impossible to doubt this consciousness of congruity and incongruity, for without this consciousness doubt itself is impossible. The primordial separation of self from not-self, of subject from object, is a consolidated result of the persistence in consciousness of similarities and dissimilarities among manifestations.

This separation of the manifestations into two large classes, and this aggregation of each of the classes into a distinct whole, are mainly spontaneous, for they necessarily precede all acts of deliberate reasoning; but they are stamped as valid by all these acts of deliberate reasoning as soon as performed. The grouping shows itself prior to any conscious act of classing. Hence these two series of antithetical manifestations are really self-grouped and self-united. The units in each group, by cohering within their own division, and the two groups, by separating themselves from each other, spontaneously form the great wholes which constitute subject and object; and the work of judgment is simply to help the already-formed segregation by placing in the faint class, or in the vivid class, such of the manifestations as have not coalesced with the others of their group.

One other constantly-recurring act of judgment there is—an act

which, while it contrasts more sharply the two terms in the division, greatly expands one of them. We see perpetually that, although the conditions under which the faint manifestations happen are always traceable, the conditions under which the vivid manifestations happen are frequently not traceable. We see, too, that, when vivid manifestations have no antecedents traceable among the vivid manifestations, they are similar to some preceding ones, which had antecedents among the vivid manifestations. Combining these two pieces of knowledge, there results the conviction that some vivid manifestations exist only potentially, but that they are capable of extension into actual ones. "And so we are made vaguely conscious of an indefinitely-extended region of power or being—not merely separate from the current of faint manifestations constituting the *ego*, but lying beyond the current of vivid manifestations constituting the immediately-present portion of the *non-ego*." Hence, again, our irrepressible consciousness of the Unknowable.

These, then, are the primary data of Agnosticism. Summarising, we have (1) the Unknowable Power, (2) the Knowable manifestations of this Power, (3) the presence of (*a*) similarities and (*b*) dissimilarities among manifestations, and (4) the grouping of manifestations into those of (*a*) subject and (*b*) object.

Without these postulates our philosophy would be impossible. They are truths assumed by all science and unshaken by all metaphysics. That the manifestations of the Unknowable come within the two categories constituting respectively the world of consciousness and the world transcending consciousness is a truth which neither the Idealist nor the Sceptic* has yet been able to displace. It is not, as the former thinks, an illusion; nor is it, as the latter holds, of uncertain value; but it is the normal and valid verdict of consciousness itself.

IGNOTUS.

* This term refers to a certain school of philosophy, and has nothing whatever to do with theology or with anti-theology.

THE POPULAR RELIGIOUS FAITH.

THE DOCTRINE OF DESIGN CONSIDERED.

THE doctrine of Design, or adaptation to certain ends, is one of the triple cords of Christian Evidence ; but one thing must be palpable to the dullest intellect, that this adaptability may arise from design, from practice, from evolution, or from mere accident.

I have seen a primitive clock. It was a huge uncouth affair. The pendulum consisted of a great stone attached to a rope, and the works were great wooden wheels. Improvement followed improvement, till this gothic machine gave birth at length to the delicate watch and scientific chronometer. This was skill resulting from practice or experience.

We have all heard about the Phœnicians who were shipwrecked, and made a fire on the sea-shore of dry sea-weed. When they woke next morning they were not a little amazed to find the sea-weed and sand had been converted into glass. That was adaptability the result of accident.

Our garden flowers, orchard fruits, and domestic animals are the results of cultivation and evolution, which are, in fact, only phases of the same thing.

Uneducated minds look on every phenomenon as the work of some unknown being. Those phenomena which the person deems favourable to his own interest he sets down as the works of a benevolent spirit ; while those which he considers to be otherwise he attributes to the malice of some evil spirit. Thus light is, in his opinion, the work of a benevolent being ; but darkness and eclipse are the deeds of malignant demons. He himself is the judge in both cases, and his own personal well-being is the only criterion. He knows that life and light are necessary ; he fancies that storms and death are evils. So what accords with his own pigmy knowledge he calls the design of benevolence and wisdom ; but what he thinks otherwise he looks on as the design of malice and wickedness. Larger views and better knowledge would instruct him that he and his interest have no part or lot in the matter ; that Nature works by fixed general laws, and that these examples of what he calls design are simply the inferences of his own ignorance.

If a goose could argue, she would say : Behold in man a proof of the

foreseeing wisdom and abiding benevolence of the creator. God saw that geese would require servants to attend to their wants, so he made man for the express purpose, and gave him hands instead of wings. He saw that geese would require houses and nests, so he endowed man with the needful instincts to build these things for us. He has cunning to outwit our enemy the fox ; he has memory to recollect our habits ; he has forethought to anticipate our wants. Is there not in all this most manifest design ? If man had been a tree, a fish, a fowl of the air, or a beast of the field, he would not have been adapted to these wise ends ; but in this perfect adaptability to our goose requirements we cannot but acknowledge and admire the wisdom and goodness of the god of geese.

See all things made for some specific use ;

“ And man for mine,” replies the pampered goose.

We all remember the famous illustration borrowed by Paley, without acknowledgment, about a watch, supposed to be picked up by a savage on a heath. The Dean says a stone would excite no train of thought, because there is no obvious design in such a thing ; but a watch, seen for the first time, and stumbled on in a heath, would call forth a long series of reflections. It has a number of parts, each of which is exactly adapted to the work it has to perform. It is made of several different materials, each suited to its place, and none of which could be mutually changed. The long-hand marks the minutes, and the short-hand the hours. The wheels are so placed as to work into each other, and move the hands in the nicest order. The works are of brass, because brass is a hard metal, which will not rust. The face is of porcelain, covered with transparent glass, that we may see the time readily ; and the spring is of steel, because steel is highly elastic. Manifestly, this shows design, and design points to a designer. This watch, therefore, must have been made by some skilled and intelligent being.

In the first place, we may feel pretty sure that the watch thus picked up in the desert would not be “going ;” so the savage could not argue as Paley says he would. The hands and works would seem to him ingenious trivialities utterly useless ; and, as for the different materials, it would be wholly a sealed mystery. No design would be apparent, and, if the savage argued at all on the subject, he would condemn the folly which wasted on a useless toy the time which might have been so much better employed in making a wigwam, carving a battle club, or stringing together the teeth of enemies slain in war.

Certainly the savage would not argue as Paley says he would. The watch found would be unlike anything in his experience. The chance is he would compare the unknown watch with some egg or seed familiar to him, and would argue thus : As an oak-tree comes from an

acorn, so this watch is either a watch-seed or the produce of a watch-seed. It is either the plant of some seed unknown, or the seed of some plant unknown. Or, he would argue, as an egg becomes a bird, so this watch may be the egg laid by some parent watch; and, as the bird hatched resembles its parent, so this watch will, in time, show us what its parent was like. Or, if he supposed the watch to be alive, as Paley's hypothesis presumes the watch in the desert sand to be "going," then would he infer that the watchmaker was a watch, like its offspring. In no case would he jump to the conclusion of design. So that the adaptability of the watch to the work to be done by it would never enter into the head of the wisest savage upon earth.

Suppose, however, for the sake of argument, that a savage did argue as Paley says he would. Well, let him go a little further in the oasis, and, stumbling for the first time on an oak-tree, apply his favourite train of thought. There are tap-roots to hold the tree firmly in the ground; there are numberless fibrous roots to pick up nourishment from the soil; there is a trunk to throw out branches, leaves to drink in the dews of heaven, a circulating sap, and a crop of acorns. Here, then, is manifest design, and design points to a designer. As a watch points to a watch-manufacturer, so a tree points to a tree-manufacturer. This sapient savage, I fancy, would find it harder to discover the latter than the former; but the illustration will serve to show the unwisdom of the Dean's argument, and the utter worthlessness thereof. No savage in the world would argue *secundum* Paley; and, if he did, his astuteness would land him in endless error. Far better think that the watch fell from the clouds, like the snow and the rain and the hail, than think oak-trees are manufactured in Birmingham, birds by bird-makers, and elephants by some limited company.

It is not a little surprising that such acute men as Dean Paley and the present Archbishop of York cannot see that the whole argument of design is a *petitio principii*. We must first assume a Deity of wisdom and power, and then prove these attributes which have been already assumed. We must first take for granted that God is the creator who has made all things in wisdom; who gave man intelligence for his lordship in creation; clothed the owl with its noiseless wing, that the mouse might not hear its prate; and gave birds their air-tube bones, that they might wing their way through fields of air; and, having assumed that all this is designed in wisdom, we are to infer the wisdom of design from the instances adduced, and, lastly, jump to the conclusion that this wisdom of design is a proof of a wise designer. In short, we must first assume our conclusion, and then prove it from the assumed data.

Now, suppose the Materialist denies that God is the creator;

suppose he denies that original man was that wise thing, which these divines take for granted—a creature capable of foretelling eclipses, an imaginative Homer, Plato, and Shakespeare ; a theologian that believed in God ; a being whose feet are in the earthly clay, but whose head is lifted up towards heaven—what then ? Suppose he denies that God, at the beginning, made birds with air-tube bones, and owls with noiseless wings—what becomes of the argument then ?

There are some who believe in evolution. There are some who believe that men were not always the things they now are ; that birds and beasts have grown into their present structure by development and natural selection. The idea is not palpably absurd. The books of the rocks seem to favour the idea. In fact, in no other way can we read this imperishable revelation ; but how fatal is this to the whole argument of design ! It was not wisdom that designed the supposed adaptability of structure, but the adaptability which caused its perpetuation. The dodo once existed, but was not adapted to the struggle of life, and so it became extinct. The beautiful black rat is no match for the fiercer grey one, so it must go to the wall. Not all the marks of wisdom and design in the multitudinous saurians or armoured fishes of the Devonian period availed to save them from extirpation. Adaptability to certain ends, no doubt, can be most readily found ; but the wisdom of design in such adaptability is quite another matter.

JULIAN.

(To be continued next month.)

COURTESY AND ETIQUETTE.

THE essence of courtesy is contained in the apostolical precept to honour all men ; but, if we are to honour all men, we must take a kindly interest in all men. Courtesy of the noblest kind is largely dependent on delicate feeling and on sympathy. Etiquette, on the other hand, being simply the recognised code of usages in fashionable society, has no moral, no emotional element. A man may, from ignorance or indifference or intention, defy all the laws of etiquette, yet be eminently courteous. A man may slavishly, scrupulously fulfil all the prescriptions of etiquette, yet be grossly uncourteous, insufferably rude. Courtesy has two sisters, chivalry and charity. All three command us to do what is right, whatever the circumstances and whatever the consequences. It is manifest that, though lessons in etiquette can be given, courtesy cannot be taught, for it is as instinctive as genius. Only so far as it is the fair and frank representation of courtesy has etiquette any real value.

They who aim at things brave and beautiful never care to get into what is called society—indeed, they shun rather than seek it. Proud of their chief treasure, independence, they know that all social relations, except those which come spontaneously, can only be maintained by the surrender of conscience and the sacrifice of individuality. Few persons have the courage to be satisfied with those spontaneous social relations. The great ambition of our countrymen, and still more of our countrymen's wives and daughters, is to ascend from their natural and, perchance, happy position to higher and higher social heights. To gratify the sublime aspirations, what an amount of dirt they are ready to eat, and what rugged and miry paths they resolutely travel ! When they have climbed as far as they can climb, have they any genuine enjoyment, any solid pleasure ? On the contrary, they are profoundly miserable. They have forsaken their friends, have deserted the scenes where heart was poured into heart with most beautiful, most bounteous tenderness. They are never more than tolerated—they are often even scorned—by the classes they bow down to with the most abject servility. An invitation withheld or a haughty glance can render them ineffably wretched ; their life is a feverish unrest. It is a wild, mad chase of phantoms ; and the phantoms mock them. Novelists have a thousand

times pictured, satirists have a thousand times scourged, snobbery ; but snobbery continues to be the grand social motive in England. The sons of the rich men who have risen from the ranks are sent to Eton or Harrow, to Cambridge or Oxford, not for education, but for the sake of forming aristocratic connections, though at the risk of moral ruin ; and the daughters are placed in showy, expensive boarding schools with the same object, and at the hazard of the same tragical result. The class which is envied and imitated, the culminating class, is less swayed by the degrading despotism of etiquette than any other class. Moving with ease and elegance in its own serene region, it views etiquette merely as a barrier between itself and the vulgar mortals who copy with a clumsy strut the calm, commanding march of its Olympian dignity.

In a healthy commonwealth there must be many social grades ; and the more numerous these are, the better ; for a true, a divine community ought to harmonise with and represent the sacred hierarchy, the infinite, the marvellous diversity of nature—the ascent by insensible degrees from the smallest animal to the elephant or the whale ; from the microscopic plant to the colossal tree of California ; from the glowworm to the star. The main, the mighty argument against all schemes of social and political equality is that they are monstrously unnatural. Since its first Revolution France has dreamed of equality in connection with liberty and fraternity ; but to both fraternity and liberty equality is bitterly hostile. The more, however, social grades are multiplied, the more should each social grade be contented with its own domain of action, of duty, and of joy. If it looks downward, it should be to help ; if it looks upward, it should be for inspiration through the vision of ideal excellence. Thus manners would flow from morals, just as in the Latin *mores*, and the French *mœurs*, morals and manners are identical.

Why is no Oriental ever vulgar, according to our European notions of vulgarity ? Why does he need no aid from the creeds and canons of etiquette in order to be polite ? Because all the social forms he employs have had a religious origin.

Courtesy, however, depends upon race as well as upon training. As regards politeness, the Teutonic contrasts with the Celtic race : the first the least, the second the most Oriental of the races that came as conquerors and colonisers to Europe. The Teuton is heavy, slow, awkward, ungainly ; the Celt is alert, agile, elastic—has the swift grace, the airy movements of the fairies and other creatures of his prolific phantasy. Sprawling in social helplessness, the Teuton desperately seizes etiquette as the sole instrument of salvation. Courteous by instinct, and accepting with eager and opulent affinity the vast heritage of Latin civilisation, the Celt holds etiquette in small estimation, because he does not feel the need thereof. The Celt, as the most courteous as well as the most

courageous of men, is best seen in the Arthurian legends. The refinement of his devotedness is as remarkable as its grandeur.

Wheresoever true courtesy prevails it is a courtesy coloured and leavened by Latin influences, and with a glow of Orientalism derived from the Crusades. Etiquette had a Byzantine parentage, and, after invading the palaces of nobles and princes and kings, it became the dull, leaden tyrant of human intercourse. In the Lower Empire the subtle Greek intellect varied theological jangle and wrangle with the pedantries and puerilities of ceremonial; and the coarse monarchs of the West, stalking forth from German forests to subdue and to slay, welcomed Byzantine etiquette the more fervently that it had an Oriental imposingness and helped them to control and check their unruly followers. These, in their turn, used it as a weapon for rendering their dependents orderly and submissive. Thus, throughout Europe, the servitude of ceremonial was added to the servitude of custom and of conquest. Man's love of freedom is often spoken of; but man is happy enough in being a slave, if to the utmost of his desire he can succeed in making others slaves. And this is how we can best explain the pervading and perennial dominion of that Byzantine etiquette which has taken so many stupid, or silly, or preposterous, or ignoble shapes in courts, in feudal castles, and in the community.

Notwithstanding the absurdities and imbecilities of etiquette, it is a woful waste of time, of labour, and of valour to make war on it. We should simply push it aside when it stands in our way. If the thralls of conventionalism are weaklings and cravens, the anarchic rebels against conventionalism are boors and brutes. A man is not the better, he is all the worse, for being rude either in speech or in action. Even the great gifts and the generous qualities of Samuel Johnson did not suffice to atone for his domineering habits and his outbreaks of ferocious temper. A man is a poltroon to the exact extent that he is a bully, and as a poltroon should he be treated. He should be thrust forth with wrath from society altogether. Apostles, prophets, heroes, martyrs, have all a law of their own and a life of their own. Let us not measure by a common-place standard the darings of their enthusiasm. But the members of society, as distinct from the regenerators of society, should feel that, while sharers of a banquet, they must be ungrudging contributors thereto: asserting, and, if needful, vindicating, their own individuality, they must unselfishly recognise and respect the individuality of others. Currishness, clownishness, cynicism, are in society trespasses against good breeding; but they are also flagrant manifestations of selfishness.

In the upper classes bad manners are often the fruit of a heartless haughtiness; in the lower of a malignant envy and a mean jealousy.

The former offence is more inexcusable than the latter ; for few can bear evil fortune without being stung by the sense of bitterness and wrong. But those who have been born to the possession of wealth and rank should reflect that, as has been shown in a charming little essay by the French writer, Reynaud, civility, politeness, urbanity, all imply duties inspired by patriotism and sweetened by culture. The civil man is the *civis* ; he who, as a member of the *civitas*—that is, the city or the state—shows respect and deference towards other citizens, other compatriots. As an inhabitant of the *polis*, a man should be *polite*, not merely to the supreme degree of good breeding, but to the supreme degree of patriotic fellowship. From *urbs* cometh *urbanity*, because, though *urbs* means a city, it also signifies the grand, the central city of the world, Rome, from which cultivation streamed as the glory and the gladness of companionship. The political attributes of courtesy occupied the thought and the pen of Cicero as much as its ethical aspects. In the best days of Rome the men and the women must, from innate dignity and from urbane influence, have attained a good breeding of a very accomplished kind. A severe stateliness must have been the characteristic of the Roman gentleman and the Roman matron. Among the Greeks there was more suavity, but less stateliness. Both among the Greeks and the Romans the universal symbolism must have combined with the ethical and political elements to mould manners, to give them nobleness and grace. Where symbolism is a perpetual presence men honour it by a reverent demeanour, how frivolous soever they in other respects may be.

Greek and Roman civilisation differed from modern civilisation by being a homogeneous whole. Modern civilisation, the more it is developed, the more it is heterogeneous. In Greece and Rome art, religion, the life of the family, the life of the citizen, were identical, so that, for the Greek or the Roman, good breeding was not something in which he had been specially trained ; it was himself, a harmonious portion of his individual and social being. For the Hebrew it was the same thing ; and in the New Testament, as well as the Old, interesting examples of politeness can be found. How nobly courteous Abraham and the sons of Heh were to each other at the purchase of Machpelah ! Besides, what of higher, of deeper, of diviner there may be in the earnest but illogical epistles of Saint Paul, who can fail to discern in them that exalted courteousness, whose cardinal peculiarity is the desire to refrain from wounding even in the inculcation of the most solemn truths ?

With the advent of knighthood in the Middle Ages a very original fantastic, fascinating form of courtesy arose ; but it had no influence on the mass of the people sunk in serfdom, in sloth, in squalor, in misery. The treatises called "Mirrors of Chivalry" were "Manuals

of Etiquette ;” yet they were also something much more, something much better, for the letter which killeth was subordinated to the spirit which animates and elevates.

During the last thirty or forty years Turveydrops, Masters of Deportment, have, in France, England, and elsewhere, tried to gain a leading place among the instructors of mankind. Doubtless they have found numerous admirers and disciples, if the number of the books they have published may be taken as a test. It must be delightful for him who cannot scribble the smallest note without heinous offences against grammar and orthography, to be enabled to write letters as brilliant, as flowing, and yet as natural, as those of Cicero ; for him who has nothing to say, and who would be wise in holding his tongue, to be suddenly and miraculously gifted with speech, as weighty as that of Bacon, as witty as that of Sheridan ; for him who is loutish and lumbering to be endowed, as by enchantment, with the grand and gracious manner of Walter Raleigh and Philip Sidney. Spite of these marvellous transfigurements, it remaineth true evermore that the ape is still the ape, and that the ass in the lion’s skin is still the ass. By all means let all persons be as well-bred as possible ; but let the source of good breeding be sought in the soul. He who finds it not there cannot enrich himself therewith through the prescriptions, the counsels, the examples of lackeys. Even at the best, imitation can produce nothing great. A copy is generally a caricature. It is a pity that so many worthy mortals should take such pains to be ridiculous when, by cultivating what is divinest in themselves, they could be perfect gentlemen.

WILLIAM MACCALL.

GEORGE ELIOT'S LIFE.*

CONCLUDING NOTICE.

IT has been mentioned, somewhat sneeringly, in support of the assertion that George Eliot's historic faculty was weak, that she surveyed the grand array of tombs in St. Peter's, and remarked nothing but some peasants feeling the teeth of Canova's lion. This apparently trifling incident seemed to us very significant, as showing exactly wherein George Eliot's power lay, and what was the particular character of her genius. Few would have been struck, as she was, by this little group of picturesque, ignorant people amid such august surroundings. This touch was in entire harmony with what she had often written—as, for instance, in “Adam Bede”: “Paint us an angel, if you can, with a floating violet robe, and a face paled by the celestial light; paint us yet oftener a Madonna, turning her mild face upward, and opening her arms to welcome the divine glory; but do not impose on us any æsthetic rules which shall banish from the region of art those old women scraping carrots with their work-worn hands; those heavy clowns taking holiday in a dingy pot-house; those rounded backs and stupid, weather-beaten faces, that have bent over the spade and done the rough work of the world; those homes with their tin pans, their brown pitchers, their rough curs, and their clusters of onions.” And she points out how many there are of these people in this work-a-day world, and how necessary it is that we should include them in our religion and philosophy, lest “we should frame lofty theories, that only fit a world of extremes.” George Eliot always did describe faithfully the common things of human life, which many *see*, but few *observe*. This was her great power, and is her great charm. Her criticism of Mrs. Gaskell's “Ruth” was: “Mrs. Gaskell seems to me to be constantly misled by a love of sharp contrasts, of dramatic effects. She is not contented with the subdued colouring, the half-tints of real life.” In that wherein she thought Mrs. Gaskell weak she herself was strong. She studied and understood human nature, and she represented

* George Eliot's Life, as Related in her Letters and Journals. Arranged and edited by her Husband, J. W. Cross. Three volumes. 42s. (William Blackwood & Sons, Edinburgh and London.)

the plain, common things of human life and character in so simple and truthful a manner that her readers had awakened in them a new interest in common things which had surrounded them all their days.

George Eliot did in her works what the French peasant artist, Millet, did in his pictures. In both cases the common-place, vulgar, and apparently uninteresting became interesting, poetical, artistic, eloquent, and instructive, without any loss of naturalness.

George Eliot's descriptions of scenery and provincial life are not surpassed by any writer in any period. It was inevitable that she should get credit for simply describing what was familiar to her, and relating what she had heard. Carping critics have asserted that there was little in the stories that came from her pen (the earlier ones especially) that originated within her own mind, or evinced genius in even a limited measure. But we are prepared to maintain that George Eliot possessed originality. For instance, there are many Mrs. Poyser in the provinces; but it does not by any means follow necessarily that Mrs. Poyser in "Adam Bede" was a veritable person whom the author had known and accurately described, or that the sharp sayings attributed to her were nothing more than local proverbs. George Eliot wrote to Mr. Blackwood in February, 1859: "The *Edinburgh Courant* has the ring of sincere enjoyment in its tone, and the writer there makes himself so amiable to me that I am sorry he has fallen into the mistake of supposing that Mrs. Poyser's original sayings are remembered proverbs. I have no stock of proverbs in my memory, and there is not one thing put into Mrs. Poyser's mouth that is not fresh from my own mint." Writing to Mr. Blackwood of the commencement of "The Mill on the Floss," she speaks doubtfully of it, saying that the "characters are on a lower level generally, and the environment less romantic;" and adds: "But my stories grow in me like plants, and this is only in the leaf-bud. I have faith that the flower will come; not faith enough, though, to make me like the idea of beginning to print till the flower is fairly out—till I know the end as well as the beginning." And again she writes: "*Truth* in art is so startling that no one can believe in it as art, and the specific forms of religious life which have made some of the grandest elements in human history are looked down upon as if they were not within the artist's sympathy and veneration and intensely-dramatic reproduction. I do well to be angry on that ground, don't I? The simple fact is, that I never saw anything of my aunt's writing, and Dinah's words came from me as the tears come, because our heart is full, and we can't help them." We can easily believe this; for a nature such as hers—strong, keen, conscientious, emotional—it is impossible to imagine would condescend to

do shallow, second-hand work. Indeed, there is abundant proof in the "Life" that none of her work was of this nature; that whatever she wrote was evolved from the depths of her own being, and manifested her thoughtfulness, earnestness, independence, and truth, and resulted from that quick perception and wide outlook over the world which universal genius has as its characteristic. "The theory," said she, "of laying by poems for nine years may be a fine one; but it could not answer for me to apply it. I could no more live through one of my books a second time than I can live through last year again."

George Eliot worked spasmodically. One reason for this was her very uncertain health; but another reason was that genius waits for inspirations. Writers of fiction have worked otherwise. We learn from a recently-published autobiography of a popular novelist that his habit was, for many years, to write so many sheets a day (before breakfast usually), allowing no engagements, and no mental or physical indisposition, to interfere with his rule. There could only be one result of such a plan—a result which was, in this case, painfully manifest—namely, that the matter written was oftentimes as bad as it was sometimes good. Those writers who possess genius generally, if not always, work spasmodically. *Now* the mind is strung up to a high pitch of excitement and enthusiasm, and "all things are possible;" and *anon* there is nothing but the wail: "Horrible scepticism about all things paralysing my mind! Shall I ever be good for anything again—ever do anything again?" or the like. So it was with Charlotte Brontë, who could plunge into her greatest work in a dismal lodging in a smoky town, while her father was undergoing a painful surgical operation; and yet, for long months, when the conditions would seem to have been more favourable, could only wonder whether she should be able to produce another book worth writing.

It was thus with George Eliot. Uncertain and capricious production may betoken indolence and self-indulgence; but where the work that is produced is full of strength and fire and individuality we say: "Here is genius, and this is how that genius, which will not be curbed and driven, works." Mr. Cross tells us that, from her own account, "in all that she considered her best writing there was a 'not herself' which took possession of her, and that she felt her own personality to be merely the instrument through which this spirit, as it were, was acting;" and he adds: "With this sense of 'possession' it is easy to imagine what the cost to the author must have been of writing books, each of which has its tragedy." In some cases the cost was exceedingly great—as, for instance, in the case of "*Romola*." We are assured that this book "ploughed into her more than any of her books." "She told me," remarks Mr. Cross, "that she could put her

finger on it as marking a well-defined transition in her life. In her own words, 'I began it a young woman, I finished it an old woman.' This strain would be increased by her rigid conscientiousness. "I will never write anything to which my whole mind, heart, and conscience don't consent, so that I may feel that it was something, however small, which wanted to be done in this world, and that I am just the organ for that small bit of work." It goes without saying that where this kind and measure of genius is possessed there must yet be laborious study ; and in George Eliot's case there was no stint of labour. We need only look at the list of books read when "*Romola*" was in course of preparation—that is, in the latter part of 1861 ; and notice with what diligence she verified all her references and quotations, in spite of possessing a remarkably retentive memory. The excessive conscientiousness of her labour is as striking as it is unusual, and the result was that her work was always good, though not always equally good.

The real source of George Eliot's genius was in her affection and sympathy. Mr. Cross tells us that "the intimate life was the core of the root from which sprung the fairest flowers of her inspiration. Fame came to her late in life, and when it presented itself was so weighted with the sense of responsibility that it was, in truth, a rose with many thorns, for George Eliot had the temperament that shrinks from the position of a public character. The belief in the wide, and, I may add, the beneficent, effect of her writing was no doubt her highest happiness—the reward of the artist which she greatly cherished ; but the joys of the hearth-side, the delight in the love of her friends, were the supreme pleasures of her life."

The great interest George Eliot awakened in the reading world was owing to the combination of this genius of which we have spoken and the ethical teaching of modern philosophy. She was the first who made fiction the vehicle of philosophical morality. The fiction of her day was frivolous and artificial. It dealt with the trivialities of individual and social life ; it discussed none of the weighty problems, answered none of the serious questionings, of anxious men and women ; and it supplied no incentive to duty or nobility.

Conventional religion made matters worse ; for it only turned human life and feeling upside down, making all serious doubt and inquiry sinful, and trivial things of the utmost importance ; it fostered selfishness, and detached consequences from causes in a manner most satisfactory to those who are only anxious above all things to escape the penalties of wrong-doing without the inconvenience of undergoing moral reformation. George Eliot, together with unrivalled powers of observation, sympathy, and description, and very considerable dramatic power, preached a doctrine which was needed ; which met the requirements of

men as no doctrine that had hitherto been promulgated in popular literature, or from the pulpit, had done. She maintained with unceasing, and yet never-wearying, emphasis that man's happiness was not found in obtaining all that he wanted, but in accepting the cross laid upon him by his relation to humanity; and that retribution was not arbitrarily arranged by a God, but was the necessary outcome of certain conduct. "Our deeds are like children that are born to us: they live and act apart from our own will—nay, children may be strangled, but deeds never: they have an indestructible life both in and out of our own consciousness." "Consequences are unpitiful; our deeds carry with them their terrible consequences, quite apart from any fluctuations that went before; consequences that are hardly ever defined to ourselves." This made George Eliot welcomed as a prophet and teacher, as well as artist and poet. And this, we take it, was a part, at any rate, of her conscious mission. On one occasion she wrote: "But with the utmost largeness of allowance for the difficulty of deciding in special cases, it must remain true that the highest lot is to have definite beliefs, about which you feel that 'necessity is laid upon you' to declare them, as something better, which you are bound to try and give to those who have the worse." Truly she had found this "highest lot."

We have finished our task; and, in conclusion, would express our obligation to Mr. Cross for having given to us a book which, while it omits very much that is necessary to a complete understanding of the great personality of whom it is so far the picture, yet has enhanced our opinion of and our respect for her sympathetic tenderness, her intellectual conscientiousness, and her literary genius.

F. SYDNEY MORRIS.

IDEAS OF A FUTURE LIFE.

THE belief in the continued existence of the individual after death is a natural corollary to that of the separability of the self from the body. The course pursued in the development of knowledge being from the general to the particular, it is only by long-continued and accumulated experiences that phenomena can be discriminated and their characteristics discovered. Savage man, consequently, invariably classes together the various forms of unconsciousness, and finds the solution of their different features in the ability of the "self," or "spirit," to leave the body. Thus, among tribes in a low degree of civilisation, death is invariably confused with sleep, only differing from the latter in the longer and continued absence of the individual from his body. Mr. Herbert Spencer has collated a large amount of evidence illustrative of this belief and the consequent attempts to awaken the deceased. Various are the endeavours to "revive the corpse by ill-usage, the calling to it by name, and the addressing to it of reproaches or inquiries; the endeavours to feed it, and the leaving with it food and drink; the measures taken to prevent its discomfort from pressure and impediments to breathing; the supplying of fire to cook by, or to keep off the cold; the care taken to prevent injury from wild beasts and to arrest decay." A curious confusion which sometimes results from these ideas is the tendency to mistake white men for ghosts of the departed. Sir George Grey was once recognised and caressed by an old Australian woman as her deceased son come back again. Bonwick tells us of a settler with a bent arm, who was recognised by the Tasmanian natives as a lately-deceased native who also had a bent arm. For the same reason, among various tribes, Europeans are called "ghost-men," "spirit-men," and the like.

Beliefs having such a basis manifestly differ greatly from the later doctrines of the immortality and immateriality of the soul. Such attributes can in no sense be predicated of the primitive belief. The individual has simply failed to return to his body, and in all other respects he is unaltered. As Dr. Tylor remarks, it is "doubtful how far the lower psychology entertains at all an absolute conception of immortality, for past and future fade soon into utter vagueness as the savage mind quits the present to explore them; the measure of months and years breaks down even within the narrow span of human life; and

the survivor's thought of the soul of the departed dwindles and disappears with the personal memory which kept it alive." Even among such a comparatively advanced people as the Zulus, with whom ancestor worship is the main religion, it is only the thought of those lately dead that kindles the religious feeling. Although they speak of a first ancestor, Umkulunkulu, the "old, old, one," as the father of their race, they believe him to be long since dead, and the calling of his name is a mere pastime for children. As most writers on anthropology have pointed out, the second life "may be brought to a violent end; the man's double may be killed afresh in battle, or may be destroyed on its way to the dead, or may be devoured by the gods." Greenlanders pity the poor souls who have to pass in winter, or in storm, the dreadful mountain where the dead descend to the other world, for then a soul may come to harm, and die the other death, when there is nothing left. The ghosts of Fijian warriors have to undergo a severe contest with Samu and his brethren, in which, if they succeed, they will enter Paradise; but, if they fail, they will be devoured by Samu and his hosts. The ghosts of the wifeless have not even this chance, but will in vain endeavour to elude the devouring Nangananga. Among the Samoans those who die an ordinary death, after wandering about will fall into the clutches of Mira and her daughters, who cook them in the great oven and eat them. It is, however, a curious illustration of the inability of the savage mind to grasp the reality of death that the Rev. Mr. Gill adds in a footnote: "Some 'wise men' will have it that these spirits live again after passing through the intestines of Miru and her followers"—a belief reminding us of the Hell of Egyptian belief, of Buddhism, and of Mediæval Christianity, in which souls torn to pieces and devoured nevertheless again resumed their forms, only to undergo similar torture.

The materiality of the "ghost" or "spirit" is well illustrated by the story of the West India planter, who, when his slaves took to committing suicide in order that they might return to their native land, cut off the heads of the dead, by which means he effectually stopped the practice, the living being fearful of going back headless. Similarly, the Chinese prefer crucifixion to decapitation, lest they shall be headless in the spirit world. The theory of the immateriality of the soul is indeed a comparatively modern doctrine, and the Christian Fathers insisted strongly upon the soul's materiality; for, as Jerome remarked, "if the dead be not raised with flesh and bones, how can the damned, after judgment, *gnash their teeth* in hell?"

W. SADLER.

THE GOD IDEA.

SECOND PAPER.

It will be necessary, in order to compare, with any degree of accuracy, the mythological systems which subsequently developed from this primitive conception of a ruling power, to glance at the mode of distribution of the various branches of the earliest human family ; and in doing so we must ever keep in mind the more than probable fact that that portion of the earth's surface which is now covered by the Indian Ocean once formed a large equatorial continent, uniting the east coast of Africa with Arabia, India, Ceylon, and the Malay Peninsula. Instead of the rivers Tigris and Euphrates emptying their waters into the Persian Gulf, and the Indus into the Arabian Sea, it is highly probable that these rivers united to form one large estuary, which emptied itself into the ocean on the south of the now submerged continent of Lemuria. It is equally probable that the large rivers, Ganges and Brahmapootra, likewise found an outlet south of a line drawn from Point de Gall to Singapore. On this submerged continent, and on the shores of these long-lost streams, it is supposed man evolved from the anthropoid apes, in the early Pleiocene, or perhaps even in the later Meiocene, geological period of the world's history. The transition stage in the pedigree of man between the Anthropoidæ and true men—that is to say, between man-like Catarrhine apes and beings possessing a larger proportion of the characteristics of the human than of the ape species—is known to Anthropologists by the name of Alali, or ape-like men. These wild and ill-formed savages wandered about in bands along the banks of these monster rivers, passing their time in hunting their less fortunate brethren of the animal kind. In course of time they multiplied and spread over the entire continent, killing all such monsters as interfered with their safety or comfort, and gradually dividing and sub-dividing into families and races, each acquiring, under the influence of the two laws of selection and adaptation, peculiarities and characteristics not common to the remainder. One branch wandered away to the west and south, becoming the progenitors of the South African races ; another found its way to the east and south, to people Australasia ; while a third struck out towards the north, overrunning Malaya, Burmah,

and Southern India. This last branch, which we term the Malay, or Polynesian, subdivided into two distinct families—the Mongolian, or Turanian, the progenitors of the ancient Chinese, Ural Turks, Akkadians, and Finns; and the Caucasian, or Iranian, the first human inhabitants of South-Western Asia. Of these Iranians one stream, it is supposed, found its way to the banks of the Nile, and became, in course of time, a distinct and powerful Egyptian race; another, the Semitic, followed the direction of the Persian Gulf, and settled in Arabia and along the banks of the Euphrates; while a third, which we call the Aryan or Indo-Germanic, covered India, Afghanistan, and Northern Persia, gradually extending along the northern shores of the Black Sea into Europe.

Now, as already stated, the earliest known records of any race are the hymns of the *Rig-Veda*, composed among the Aryans of Northern Persia, probably from earlier traditions handed down to them from the older Iranian stock, or even from the still earlier Polynesians; and it is remarkable that in all ancient mythological records, as well as on monumental inscriptions, the same vein of solar myth as is found in the *Rig-Veda* is clearly traceable beneath the accumulated mythological lore of future ages. The main idea in all mythologies seems to have been that of a saviour-deity conquering the evil genius of night, or winter, and bringing back the day, or summer, to replenish the earth. As already stated, Indra was to the Aryans of the early Vedic period the saviour-god who, with his companions, Vishnu and Rudra, leads forth Agni, the god of celestial and terrestrial fire, to the bosom of Varuna, where his influence operates upon Soma, the fertilizer of earth. A conqueror from early morn to midday, Indra's power grows weaker as the evening approaches, until at last the twilight yields him up to Vritra, who slays him, after which he is tormented by Ahi, the dragon, for the remainder of the night. This drama was probably derived from the original Iranian stock, and as probably underwent considerable modification before being finally committed to writing as a cultus by the Aryans; and, therefore, we should expect to find some resemblance between the Aryan, Semitic, and Egyptian mythological systems. This is precisely what we do find on carefully comparing these three oldest of all known mythologies, though, as will be seen further on, each accumulates such a vast quantity of fresh mythological matter that the original conception is considerably obscured, and in each the original deities become in course of time so mixed up with one another that it is almost impossible to separate their individual characteristics.

Although Agni was said to have been begotten by the conjunction in the air of Varuna and Prihovi (Prithivi), all the principal gods, or Devas, originally conceived as the phenomena and power of heaven.

were called the children of Dyaus and Prihovi, Agni and Indra being considered the two chief of the twelve Devas. Dyaus, Prihovi, and their progeny afterwards became endowed with moral qualities, and were looked upon as creators and governors of the world ; and as time wore on the original Vedic deities gradually gave place to purely solar deities : the sun was called Surya, and differed from Agni, who was god of terrestrial and celestial fire—sun, lightning, and altar fire in one, the soul of universe, and mediator between the gods and men ; Surya was also Savitri, the quickener, who in the early morn rouses the sleepers, and in the evening twilight buries them again in sleep ; he is also Vishnu, the companion of Indra, who traverses the celestial space in three long strides ; he is Pushan, the nourisher and faithful guide of men and animals ; and he is Yama, who traverses the steep road to death and the shades. Thus the gods multiplied—the original supreme deity, Varuna, who was one with Indra, though different from him, giving place to a multitude of solar deities, children of Dyaus, the great dawn-god or day-father.

As the old Vedic language became lost to the people there arose a custom of setting apart certain individuals to faithfully preserve the old and sacred records, and thus arose the priestly caste of Brahmans, whose duties consisted in transcribing the sacred hymns of the *Rig-Veda* and preserving the knowledge of the sacred language in which they were first written. The great day-father, Dyaus, now received the name of Brahma, the magic power, and Prajapeti, the lord of creatures, and was endowed with three divine energies—Agni (fire), Vayu (air), and Surya (the sun), which together formed a subordinate triad. Soma became associated with the moon ; Asura became the demon of hell, which was peopled with tormenting monsters ; Indra and Vishnu became blended with Surya ; and Rudra was converted into Siva and identified with Agni. As Brahmanism progressed the principal worship on the shores of the Ganges gradually centred round Vishnu, who was supposed to undergo periodically a number of Avataras, or incarnations, by means of which he rescued fallen man from the fate awaiting him. These descents to the lower world were very frequent, and appear to have had some connection with the zodiacal constellations ; for we find the incarnation at one time taking place as a man, at another as a fish, at another as a lion, and so on.

The most ancient of the Avataras was probably the incarnation of Krishna, the Indian Hercules, who was mentioned in the Vedic writings as “ Krishna, the son of Devaki,” and in whose honour festivals were kept, at a very early period, similar to those connected with the cultus of Bacchus. Megasthenes found the worship of Krishna prevailing along the shores of the Ganges at the beginning of the third century

before our era, and described it as the worship of Hercules. This incarnate offspring of the ancient sun-god, Vishnu, was said to have been born at Mathura, a place situated between Delhi and Agra, and to have acted the part of a saviour of the world and a mediator between the gods and men. Soon after his birth his life was sought by the reigning tyrant, Kamsa, who feared for the safety of his throne, which necessitated the removal of Krishna to a place of safety. Arriving at manhood, this young divinity slew the serpent Kaliya, and sported with the Gopis, or female cowherds, among whom he had been brought up. He was fond of wine, Bacchanalian revels, and sensualities, though considered to be immaculately holy, and resigned to his fate, which was to suffer death in order to relieve the earth of the burden of a proud race. For this purpose he was incarnated in the womb of his mother, Devaki, and for this purpose he lived and died.

In the mountainous regions away from the Ganges the cultus of Siva was the more prevalent, Vishnu being considered of secondary importance; but, as sects gradually were formed out of the ancient religion, one party preferring this deity and another that, an attempt was made, which eventually proved successful, to re-unite the various religious parties and re-instate the principal gods in their original places. The ancient orthodoxy was brought into sympathy with the new religion in a very curious manner, by making Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva a trinity of essences or attributes of the supreme Brahm, each a supreme god in itself, and each equal with the others in importance; Brahma being specially the creator, Vishnu the redeemer or preserver, and Siva the destroyer. At times Krishna was added to the new trinity as a fourth figure; but this was an innovation which found little favour, inasmuch as Vishnu and Krishna were the same god, the one but the incarnation of the other. Thus the old idea of Prajapati, or Brahma, with the three divine energies—Agni (fire), Vayu (air), and Surya (the sun)—were revived in a manner as a new trinity of essences of the supreme deity, under other names; and the arrangement thus concluded has continued in use to this day with the orthodox Hindus. We find, therefore, that, despite the accumulation of fresh myths, which grew larger as time wore on, the original conception of the constant necessity for a divine saviour was never lost, and that, as the approach of night in the Vedic system was followed by the torments of the shades, and the powers of darkness were destroyed by the re-appearance of the dawn-god, so also the approaching extinction of the people under a wicked tyrant was followed by the misery which preceded the appearance of the saviour-god, Krishna. In fact, every myth that occurs in the religions of India is built out of this original idea of the powers of light being overcome by the powers of darkness and finally rescued by a redeeming god.

In later times, as the science of astronomy became more popular and better understood, not only was the daily apparent course of the sun the source from which myths were fabricated, but his annual apparent march through the zodiacal signs was also drawn upon for the creation of more imposing and elaborate dramas ; and in this manner were produced the fables containing allusions to the two crucifixions, or passage of the sun across the equator at the vernal and autumnal equinoxes, and the rites of baptism when the sun was passing through the sign Aquarius, and fasting during the period of the sun's transit through Pisces, etc.

The religion of Boodhism is an offshoot of the Brahman system, having originated in the so-called incarnation of Vishnu, Gautama Boodha, whose powerful personality has left an indelible impress upon the religion. This remarkable man lived about the end of the sixth century ; but the real history of Boodhism does not commence until about the middle of the third century before our era. The doctrines taught by this great reformer were brotherly love, self-sacrifice, and an eternal Nirvana as the consummation of all bliss. The doctrine of the transmigration of the soul was still maintained ; but a state of Nirvana, or absolute non-existence, was declared to be the deliverance from the endless succession of re-births for those who, by their purity of life and heart, merit such a blissful end. Admitting that men were born in different castes, determined by their good or evil deeds in a prior existence, Boodha yet declared that all might attain the highest salvation, and that none, not even those of the highest caste and most sacred offices, could do this without having regard to the well-being of all his fellow creatures. The authority of the Vedas was rejected by the Boodhists, as also the whole dogmatic system of the Brahmins ; and in their place were substituted a higher moral teaching, a more equitable relationship of men, and a wide-spreading system of communism. This reformation of ancient dogmatic faith was not destined to last long uncorrupted, for the monasteries established by the Boodhists for the purpose of affording an asylum to the poor and destitute soon became infested with religious fanatics—Jainas, as they were called, some of whom went naked, while others robed themselves in white linen. These ascetic monks looked forward to Nirvana as their final goal, practised the most severe austerities, received confession, administered priestly absolution, and kept regular feast and fast days ; but they discountenanced the growing custom of worshipping relics which was finding favour with other Boodhist sects. Thus gradually the primitive Aryan conception of a ruling power developed into a huge system of dogmatism, monachism, and ritual in the countries south and east of the Indus, as far even as the confines of the country of the great Mongol race,

whose religion is as yet but little known to us, although it bears strong marks of having been originally derived from the same source as that from which came the Vedic system.

HERBERT JUNIUS HARDWICKE, M.D., F.R.C.S.

(*To be continued.*)

SACRED PERSONS.

THE so-called sacredness of the religions of the world is extended to the men who officiate in connection with them. The Church is sacred, the rites are sacred, the day of meeting is sacred, and the books used are sacred; the prayers are a sacred form of words, sacred vestments are worn. But all this would be of little value if the men who officiate were not sacred also. Hence comes in a priesthood composed of men who, by virtue of their alleged sacred ordination, claim superiority over the rest of the world. And this is not a mere setting apart of men for a particular work who are well qualified to perform the duties devolving upon them, to which no kind of objection would be offered. It is the attempt, by virtue of a spurious form, to endow those who subject themselves to it with a power to which they can lay no legitimate claim—a power of, at least, a *quasi*-supernatural character. The whole thing is exceptional, and might almost be called miraculous. It is a religion of artificial inventions. No one who accepts it judges of it by the standard of sober thought and common sense. Large numbers are willing to consider every place profane but the Church, all days profane but the Sunday, all men profane but the clergy, and all things profane except those which the Church has consecrated. This, while unnecessarily elevating assumed sacred persons and things, gives a kind of licence to do pretty much what one likes as regards the others.

The Roman Catholic clergy claim an ordination handed down in a direct line from St. Peter, and upon this they base the spiritual power which they arrogate to themselves. Never has it yet been very clearly defined what these powers are, or how they can be imparted by placing a bishop's hand upon one's head. However, the injurious part of it is that these are the very persons who, by virtue of this process, arrogate to themselves a counterfeit superiority over all other men. It is not the

superiority of learning, of thought, or intellect, or research, or knowledge of human nature, or of character, or even of capacity to perform the functions allotted to them, for the whole of these may be absent, or, at least, present in but a small degree. It is a superiority apart from, and independent of, any or all of them, and based upon what is termed the priestly character—that is, the sacredness of the office held. You can no longer talk to such persons as man to man, or argue with them by appealing to their reason and judgment, or to their insight into matters. They seek to demolish you at a stroke by quoting against you the mysterious thing they call the Church, and by arrogantly setting forth their priestly character. Such an assumption of sacredness is both odious and hateful, the enemy of good feeling and charity, and the foe of the human race. But the High Church Protestant clergyman is ten times worse; he is a sham of a sham, a counterfeit of a spurious thing, an imitation of a worthless article. He claims spiritual power by virtue of a succession which, it is admitted, does not exist in his case. But, in all ages, priests, real or pretended, have been the obstructives to humanity. They have ever opposed that which was calculated to benefit mankind, and have aided and abetted all kinds of tyranny and oppression. Their pretended superior powers have seldom been used for good, but have been the source of endless mischief on all sides, and their boasted and sacred character has been “a mockery, a delusion, and a snare.”

Thus it will be seen that the term sacred has been misunderstood, and its legitimate meaning perverted; consequently, shams have been produced, follies created, prostration caused, superstitions fostered, and delusions perpetuated. The work of the Secularist is to correct these drawbacks, and to proclaim that the only sacred places are the home of truth, the abode of justice, the palace of industry, and the temple of sincerity. The only sacred persons are those who delight to dwell within the precincts of these humanly-consecrated spots, made holy by their virtues and sacred by their lofty and ennobling associations.

CHARLES WATTS.

EVOLUTION AND REVELATION.*

To those curiously-conscientious critics who, in order to prevent prejudice, write their comments first and read their books afterwards, this volume should prove unusually attractive. It is penned in a remarkably pleasant, though in a by no means remarkably pure, style; and it contains an unlimited number of quotable passages. Besides being—as such works go—eminently readable, it is eminently fair; and to say that an orthodox theological work is eminently fair is to say a great deal. Conceived in an extremely liberal spirit, and developed as it is conceived, it touches a variety of topics which it does not settle, and settles a variety of topics which it does not touch. Through its twenty-four chapters many minor problems are presented without being solved; but the greatest is solved without being presented. Dealing with numerous phases of thought, the author makes a highly commendable effort to misrepresent none; and one could wish that the signal success which he has achieved in some cases had not been marred by signal failure in others. But where he fails by under-stating an opponent's case, he fails unwittingly; and where he succeeds in over-stating it, he succeeds unintentionally. To the general reader, in fact, the volume is everything that could be desired.

But when the work passes out of the hands of the easily-pleased general reader into the hands of the hyper-critical reviewer, it ceases to be perfect. The latter looks for the flaws, and finds them. Often he seeks nothing but flaws, and as often finds nothing but what he seeks. To examine the Rev. G. Matheson's book under a mental microscope, and to point out all the imperfections of structure and of argument, would be an enormous task—a task under which either our microscope or our magazine would break down. Compared with the labour of correcting the reverend gentleman's inaccuracies all other labour is light. By the side of that work, the work of the slave in the galleys or in the mines, of the thief on the treadmill, or of the needle-woman in the garret, is a most agreeable recreation. But we must not shrink from doing a little of our labour.

* "Can the Old Faith Live with the New? or the Problem of Evolution and Revelation." By the Rev. George Matheson, M.A., D.D. (London: William Blackwood and Sons; 1885.)

The process by which a child entangles a skein of thread is a process analogous to that by which the Rev. G. Matheson has produced his book. A small boy playing for half-an-hour with the thread, twirls it, and twists it, and ties it, and turns it, into all sorts of fantastic shapes ; and no amount of patience enables the boy's mother to prove the unbroken continuity of her once-symmetrical skein. Similarly, the much-larger boy, in playing for twice that length of time with an argument, turns it upside-down and inside-out, and ties it in knots, and entangles it in every conceivable way ; and no amount of precision and patience enables a logician to unravel the tangled thought.

In discussing the question, "Is the Object of Faith Knowable?" the author makes an announcement which is so startling that we cannot pass it by without comment. He asks :—

When I say that God is infinite, what do I mean? Clearly this : that He is a Being possessed of attributes which in their intensity are boundless.....We demur to the statement that God is the infinite. A man may say that God is infinite, or that God has infinitude ; but to say that God is *the* infinite is equivalent to saying that the name God may be applied to any object which suggests the idea of boundlessness. To affirm that God is the infinite seems to us just as absurd as to say that the rose is the red. The rose is not the red, because redness is a quality which may belong to many objects besides roses.

Splendid ! Mr. Matheson, splendid ! So *God* is not a noun, but an adjective. God is infinite, but not *the* Infinite. For the word *infinite*, as a substantive, the English language has no further use. Let all future grammarians and lexicographers remember this fact. Henceforth let them expunge the obnoxious word from their grammars and their dictionaries.

But the reverend gentleman's argument is just fifty per cent. too clever. It annihilates one old absurdity by creating two new ones. To put the matter philosophically ; The author's language means—if it mean anything at all—that the Unknowable is to be regarded as quantitatively finite and as qualitatively infinite. Such a conception involves a double impossibility. It involves, first, the impossibility that there can exist a being limited in extent and unlimited in intensity ; and, secondly, the impossibility that there can exist a being unlimited in extent and limited in intensity. Granting for the nonce that there are degrees of impossibility, and that one thing may be more impossible than another, it becomes a delicate question to discuss—whether a bounded God with boundless attributes, or a boundless God with bounded attributes, is the more flagrantly impossible phenomenon. A shilling which should be limited on one side and unlimited on the other, or a railway-line finite at this end and infinite at that, or an orange bounded in size and unbounded in juiciness, would

be a sufficiently interesting object. Yet Mr. Matheson's God, finite in quantity and infinite in quality, is, philosophically, a similar sort of production.

The reverend doctor is dangerously familiar with Herbert Spencer's Philosophy. He has just enough knowledge to misquote. There are 400 pages in the doctor's book, and there are as many references to Spencer as there are pages; but by no manner of accident has the reverend gentleman, in a single case, blundered into an accuracy. We do not imply that he has drawn his draughts of philosophy through some polluted little stream instead of from the fountain-head; but we do imply that his thirst has been lacking in keenness, and, consequently, that his draughts have been lacking in copiousness. One specimen of this superficiality must suffice.

By Spencerian students it will be remembered that, in section eleven of "First Principles," there are discussed the three verbally intelligible suppositions which may be made respecting the origin of the universe. After an exhaustive examination, the conclusion there reached is not only that these suppositions are equally untenable, but that no tenable supposition can ever be framed. Well, Mr. Matheson gives a garbled statement of these hypotheses, and then remarks :—

Even the Agnostic must hold that one or other of these is the explanation of the origin of things.....But.....the acceptance of any one of these alternatives is tantamount to the acceptance of a miracle.

What shall we say of language like this? Under such violent provocation it is hard to be easy. We shall, however, content ourselves with a simple repudiation. Neither Spencer nor any other accredited exponent of Agnosticism has ever accepted any one of the three theories. On the contrary, he has again and again, in the most-explicit manner, declared all of them to be unthinkable. If the doctor had taken the trouble to read carefully the very section which he misquotes, he would have seen that declaration elaborately vindicated. Indeed, the fundamental difference between Agnostics and non-Agnostics consists in the fact that the former deny and the latter affirm the reasonableness of one or more of these solutions.

But, in spite of its verbal errors, in spite of its material fallacies, there is something in this volume which we cannot but admire; and to all who are interested in philosophical questions, or who do their own thinking, the work cannot be unwelcome.

ARTHUR SPALDING.

PECTORAL PLENITUDE.

WHY dost thou write what no one cares to read ?
 To satisfy a deep internal need.
 My life divinest is my hidden life,
 Life cleft remote from earth and toil and strife.
 I cannot breathe my grandest ecstasy ;
 It treasured is within my inmost heart,
 And far too sacred is for human speech.
 Further than God and God's eternity
 It yearneth, hungering to be a part
 Of mystic elements, beyond the reach
 Of boldest phantasy, most daring thought,
 But which souls holy have unconscious sought
 From age to age, as for their natal clime
 The unseen Eden of a dream sublime.
 But if from the Unspeakable I go
 To the domain of utterance ; if glow
 With prayer, praise, celestial words, my lips ;
 If in the gloom, the anguish, the eclipse
 Of all things human, I, with valiant cry,
 Cleave through the clouds a pathway to the sky,
 What matters it that there is none to hear
 But the glad dwellers in a purer sphere ;
 The dear ones who are numbered with the dead,
 And who with God's angelic food are fed ?
 What no one cares to read why dost thou write ?
 That after tasting an expressed delight
 I may go back to the ecstatic rest
 Where raptures swarm that cannot be expressed ;
 But what, from peace and plenitude of mind,
 I utter may response most joyous find
 In noblest souls, though mobs may it decry
 As foolish tale, as insipidity.
 Would that we could forget aspiring bold
 The mart where man's applause is bought and sold ;
 Where truth is mocked and fraud and falsehood reign,
 And charlatans the rabble's homage gain !
 Renown should sacred as religion be :
 If less than this, it is a curse to thee and me.

WILLIAM MACCALL.

A.D. 2500.

ANTIPODEAN AGNOSTICISM: ITS WHENCE AND ITS WHITHER.

CHAPTER V.—CONCLUSION.

What still of strength is left employ
 This end to help attain ;
 One common wave of thought and joy
 Lifting mankind again.

—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

So rapidly did the good fellowship initiated by Josiah Crimes spread through the island, so unanimous was the worship of the hero, that it is scarcely surprising that the wirepullers discovered its political value. Here was a large machinery, with a special reputation for disconcerting humbug and for throwing its influence into wholesome channels. Certain politicians, honest enough in their intentions and their cause, tempted the leading worshipper of Crimes's memory with the title of Chief-Director of the Board of Religion, since the term Bishop had strangely gone out of favour. To this Chief-Directorship was to be attached a fixed salary, a method of remuneration more acceptable to a pater-familias than the then lately somewhat grudgingly-given "free-will offerings" of the people. From the moment that salary was accepted the genuine hero-worshippers began to die out, and to be superseded with a spurious growth of idolaters. The idolaters were the subject of so much cross-examination that, at last, in self-defence, it became necessary to define. The old definition of the faith had been "telling the truth and shaming the Devil." The new one was, of course, conformity to certain articles, and these had now to be put together.

It became desirable that the articles by a given date should receive the sanction of the House and of the President, who, we may mention, had long since become hereditarily entitled to office. The Chief-Director threw them off in a jaunty way in his dressing-room after he had his bath, when his circulation was in the best order, and the happy thoughts thrived most luxuriantly in his well-irrigated brain. His daily average was about five a day during twenty days. But, on one occasion, Mrs. Proudie was a little aggravating, the nervous energy was diverted into less pleasant channels, and only four were achieved. Hence a

sum-total of Ninety-Nine. It was easy enough to get them through Convocation, for it was well understood that, at the hands of the Chief-Director, the chances of promotion of any too free and independent elector would be small indeed. These articles incorporated the current notions about Crimes, a certain proportion of which, if the truth must be told, were scarcely-verified gossip. Hero-worship has its dangers as well as its advantages, and where two or three enthusiasts are gathered together there you may be sure, in the midst of them, is some exaggeration. In this way honest mistakes became ultimately the pivot of a sect—a *Pons Asinorum*, which yet performed a useful function in separating stagnation from adventure.

This period, and the three centuries which bring us up to A.D. 2,500, were, in truth, the blissful hour of the Antipodes, when national and individual life were alike at their highest tide, and the fairest and proudest blossoms which the plant could produce were borne aloft on the parent-stem. But proud and happy periods give way under the allurements of a more world-wide usefulness. The ebb will carry the invigorating flood to other coasts, and the blossom but ministers to seed which the wind, coming we know not whence, and going no hagio-meteorological offices can predict whither, will carry where it listeth.

There were many poor, ignorant, and idle who had not yet heard the message which Crimes so earnestly delivered, and which the Ninety-Nine articles, in a certain archaic and fossilised form, illustrated and incorporated. Such, during the three centuries in question, were constrained by the golden cords of needed charity to accept without analysis the official statements of Crimes's life and doctrines. But the better class, with the help of such friends as they could trust, formulated again, in fear and trembling, the wishes of the Mother; and their demurrer to the superseded formulas came to be registered as Agnosticism in the theological dictionaries. But for their active aims they dared to borrow the ever-dear names of Faith, Hope, and Love—Love, they meant, for the Mother and for the best, the noblest, and the truest of her sons; Hope for humanity, whether integrating or dispersing; and Faith in the beneficent effects of truth-telling.

As for their hero, he seemed to have passed into commission. Now, in this man or in that woman they might recognise adumbrations of special virtues, and in the most notorious blasphemer of the day, whom the common people heard gladly, and whom the chief priests "prayed for" as their bitterest enemy, it was easy to discern some vivid characteristics of the unconscious founder of the Antipodean Church.

Odd to notice how many good, brave, and honest men still

buttressed the Antipodean Church long after the universal Mother had pointed out large holes in the Ninety-Nine articles. But patching—was it not easy to patch? Not so easy: “The rent will be made worse,” said some; “Beautiful in its old age,” sighed others; while the rest looked up definitions of Restoration to match their archæological tastes. It is difficult to alter a family settlement when the children are dead and bankrupt, lunatic and married; so the poor old Church blundered on, while the Good, the Brave, and the Honest, thinking virtue to be impossible without mechanical assistance, started a manufactory of suffragan crutches. But it was not the increasing senility which attached them to the institution—rather the many traces of past loveliness. You may have observed Darby and Joan, my friends. The aged couple have few teeth left, but many wrinkles; their hair is whiter than chlorine could bleach it; but so assiduously have they dovetailed their mutual aids and wants during a life not far short of three-score years and ten that, when his better half departs, I fear me much for the comfort, or even the existence, of the worthy veteran.

* * * * *

I have tried, my friends of any hemisphere, to depict the Whence of Antipodean Agnosticism: the Whither—does it not rest rather with you than with me?

W. GREATHEED.

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY.

It is not uncommon for orthodox believers to reject all the passages in the Bible that are opposed to their own interests and notions, and to class them among the "ancient delusions" which modern knowledge has rendered worthless ; but credulity, that seemingly swallows everything, and secretly ejects whatever is distasteful, although very convenient, is not sound either in conscience or logic. Do Christians believe in the divinity and the sanctity that Mosaic authority ascribes to the High Priest ? If so, why do they reject the Pope, who is the immaculate and infallible impersonation of the God of the Bible ? The religion of the Bible is a theocracy. Christians reject that divinely-appointed mode of government. They do not believe in the divine ordinance of fasting nor in the sacredness of tithes. They do not believe that dwelling in tents is a God-ordained duty. They do not think it sinful to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, except when learning leads to the heresy of doubting the crotchets of their particular Church. The fruit grown on their own stock of learning Christians would freely distribute ; but the mental freedom that gathers fruit from every opening flower they would fetter and suppress. Do Christians believe in the charms, tokens, wizards, and witches of the Bible ? Do they believe in the circumcision of the Bible ? *Circumcision was held very sacred in Israel.* It was piously revered by all the tribes. The divine ordinance, however, did not originate with the Jews. Circumcision was practised by the most barbarous tribes long before God bid Abraham to leave the house of his father and journey to Shechem. In the early morning of the human race, when the people knew no law but *might*, and when the Lord of Hosts was a man of war, the savagest and most barbarous tribes practised circumcision—not, however, as a religious observance, but as a foul and superstitious military scheme. They believed that circumcision not only ensured male children, but that it fitted their offspring for strategy, plunder, murder, and rapine. The ordinance and its objects were barbarous, unnatural, and ungodly. It was the most savage and ferocious rite ever practised by man. In primitive ages, when the despotic gods of battle ruled the world, female births were regarded with horror. To fighting tribes women are a great encumbrance ; hence their common greeting was, " May God give you

male children." Among all savage tribes, and especially with the Jews, the superstition prevailed that circumcision caused a large preponderance of male births; therefore, the rite was enforced by law. It was well suited to a wandering banditti of robbers, who lived by plunder; but the system was so barbarous, unnatural, and ungodly that its very name ought to be erased from the language of all civilised nations.

When orthodox believers give up the God of the Bible, the Sabbath of the Bible, the Church of the Bible, the inspired record of the Creation; the first, second, third, and fourth commandments of Moses; the feasts, the fasts, the tithes, the charms, tokens, wizards, and witches of the Bible; the vestments, ceremonies, and sacraments of the synagogue, they have left only the secular laws of the Jews, the history and the biography of the leaders of Israel, and the criminal laws of Moses to cherish, honour, and cling to; and these belong wholly to the secular, not to the spiritual, duties of mankind. The worldly wrongdoing and the criminal laws belong wholly to the police. In Israel the Mosaic laws were administered by the priests; but in this age all moral, social, and criminal offences are judged by secular authority, and not by religious teachers.

Pious believers who deliberately put aside every count contained in the Bible, and with utter unconsciousness condemn their neighbours because they are guilty of the same sin, may fairly be classed with the Pharisee who said, "I am not as other men;" and they are closely related to those who make clean the outside of their cup and their platter, while the inside is full of corruption. Carlyle said: "I respect the religious people; on the whole, I take up my love for them. No class of persons can be found with so much humanity in them. Their toleration for others, however, is but doubt and indifference; for, if we touch the thing they believe in, or doubt the dogmas they value—namely, their own self-conceit—they are rattlesnakes then."

It cost many years of deadly strife and a deluge of blood to free England from the despotism of religious tyranny; and the great struggle for mental liberty and free thought has not yet ceased. We have an increasing crowd of dangerous enemies in our midst, whose sole aim is to fetter the brains of the people and to obtain pay for permission to enjoy Paradise. Even in the Government there are zealous friends of Popish priestcraft, who are eagerly anxious to drag us back into the darkness, superstition, bigotry, flummery, and persecution of the Popish Church. Their blindness and their helpless mental derangement would provoke only a smile if they formed but one of the countless varieties of creeds that prevail in England. But *outside* this little island there are *two hundred millions* of rabid Roman Catholics, whose subcant and venomous priestcraft are perpetually welling among us and

threatening to overwhelm us. Sixty years ago a Roman Catholic was scarcely known in this country : now we are probably one-third bastard Papists ; and this vastness of cant and treachery will—perhaps before long—lure us into a trap, and utterly extinguish the only spark of free thought and mental daylight there is in the world. Thousands still cling to the habits and customs of a bygone age, and become “stratified mental fossils.” The credulity that can swallow, digest, and eject, without straining, the Bible of Moses, with its atrocious wars, its eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, and the New Testament gospel of charity, forgiveness, and peace, is very elastic and very convenient. The inhumanity of men to their fellow-men has always been in proportion to their capacity for swallowing the dogmas of their priests and their greedy desire to grasp the profit which praying and preaching produce.

Christianity, like the Bible, has two sides, which sensible people would do well to consider. It has its emotional and its historical sides ; it consists of known facts and dreamy fancies. With many pious people the fictions and the fancies are by far the most vital, and they not seldom enforce their dogmas with rigid intolerance. The tender mercies of bigots who fail to see the difference between facts and feeling are usually heartless and cruel. No intelligent man, however, would attempt to dogmatise on religious creeds and their conflicting *interests* without some knowledge of the early history of Christianity. A slight knowledge of the condition of the world at the time when the doctrine of peace, charity, and goodwill displaced the savage ferocity of such war demons as Julius Cæsar would not be wholly useless. In that age the one and the only desire of the despotic nobility was to find fresh nations to rob, slaughter, and enslave. A class far more horrible than wild beasts of prey governed the world, and believed themselves to be omnipotent gods : they savagely stamped out all opposition to their power, and they fiercely resisted all reform. Neither life nor property was secure. Industry, freedom, and social rights were scarcely conceived of. The people who were constantly in fear of death and savage tortures had neither time nor inclination to wrangle and dispute in religious controversies : “self-preservation is Nature’s first law.” When there was no law but might, and no god but such savage, barbarous, and audacious brigands as Julius Cæsar, the religion of peace, charity, and brotherly love was a dangerous doctrine to discuss. The supreme power of the gods of war could only be crushed by the combined power of the whole community ; hence the people, the priests, and the creeds of all nations and languages combined to coerce and control the barbarous bandits which blighted the earth. Human nature gasped for life, industry struggled to be free, and humanity hardly escaped with life. The fight

lasted a thousand years, and then praying priests became almighty gods, governing earth and heaven. In savagery they out-Heroded Herod ; they crushed all rivals, destroyed learning, and forbade the people to think. The change from mighty gods like Alexander, Pompey, Joshua, and Moses, to pious priests, was the first conception of social rights ; it was the birthday of public opinion. In the primitive world savage brigands ruled ; but when slavery and conscription cast off their fetters the twin birth of religion and politics received the breath of life.

When the gods of imperial Rome governed the world Cæsar decreed that all nations and peoples should be taxed to enrich Rome. The whole world, however, rebelled, and the fall of the empire was the result. But when brigands and bandits ceased to rule, the gods of war put off their fighting garb, and draped themselves in the robes of the great high priest ; and in their new dress *they* decreed that the whole world should be taxed for the good of the Church of Rome. During sixteen hundred years the Roman hierarchy ruled supreme, and the wealth they extorted from the people made the Roman Church more mighty than the imperial Cæsars had ever been. That power has not yet decayed nor declined. The wealth which the Church of Rome wrung from the masses, by keeping the people in ignorance and poverty, made her supreme, and she is still the mightiest despotism in the world. She is able to set her foot on the neck of all civil governments, and her Jesuitical treachery is little suspected by the passive worshippers who produce her princely wealth. No human power can control the machinery of the Pope. In the old world mighty men of war, in their avarice to extort tribute, brought humanity to the brink of ruin ; in the Christian world the scramble for religious pay, which all Churches and creeds claim, will ultimately bring discord, war, and desolation on the earth. Thus man seems doomed to be forever the prey of his fellow-man.

JAMES MANDERFIELD.

NOTES AND SCRAPS.

THE publication of the Spencerian papers and of the promised series of Agnostic tracts is unavoidably delayed. The papers and tracts will, we trust, be ready by the date of our next issue.

It is stated in well-informed circles that Colonel Ingersoll contemplates visiting this country during the coming summer. Arrangements will, it is said, be made for the distinguished American Freethinker to deliver addresses at St. James's Hall, London; Free Trade Hall, Manchester; St. George's Hall, Liverpool, and at other large halls in London and the provinces. We hope to be able to make a more definite announcement next month.

We commend to the notice of our readers an excellent little *brochure*, entitled "Fashionable Belief *versus* The Logic of Facts," the author of which has succeeded in formulating a clear, original, and striking *résumé* of the glaring inconsistencies and decrepit characteristics of the popular religious faith. Mr. Manderfield, though no professional *littérateur*, wields a skilled and powerful pen, and frequently his earnest assertion of man's absolute dependence on nature for his moral, intellectual, and physical health is touched by a fine sense of humour and enriched by most apposite illustration. This is, we believe, almost the first contribution Mr. Manderfield has made to liberal literature; but it will be gratifying to our readers to know that "Fashionable Belief" will be followed by a larger and more ambitious work.

Under the heading of "Surprising Lectures in America," the following leaderette appeared in the April issue of *Present Day*, a monthly journal edited by Mr. G. J. Holyoake:—

An article contributed to the *Boston Investigator* gives an account of a lecture delivered by Mr. Charles Watts at Pittsburg, which is a curious example of the way in which praise is given in America. The account runs as follows:—

"At 3 p.m., same day and place, Mr. Watts spoke on 'Agnosticism and Theism.' He defined, explained, and defended Agnosticism as the only consistent attitude between Atheism and Theism. Atheism, the speaker said, was illogical, because it dogmatically denied that of which we had no means of gaining any knowledge whatever. He then attacked Theism, as dogmatically taught by the clergy. What followed can only be described as a tornado of logic, accompanied by copious showers of wit and humour, with an occasional hailstorm of raillery thrown in. To enumerate all the brilliant things said would transcend the limits of this letter; suffice it to say, he left the Christian Theists not the ghost of a leg to stand upon, or the dream of a peg upon which to hang the shadow of a hope. When the storm of applause which

followed his peroration had subsided, he said : 'Having on my arrival in the city authorised,' etc., etc.

The "tornado" must have ceased before the "showers" fell, and the "showers" must have cleared off before the "hailstorm" set in. Mr. Watts must have made a terrible clearance not to have left "the ghost of a leg, or the dream of a peg" about, and to have reduced hope to the condition of a fiend who has no shadow behind him. If all this be true, we ought to have Mr. Watts back again as soon as possible ; for these performances would be popular here. However, Mr. Watts is not answerable for these extraordinary accounts : it might befall any clever man to be written about in a similar way. What is true and what is obvious is that Mr. Watts has proved a very successful speaker both in Canada and the United States, and that he has the good fortune to satisfy the utmost expectations of those who have invited him to advocate Secular and Freethought propositions there.

It will interest English friends to know that Mr. Watts will probably return to England in July next ; but it is doubtful whether his sojourn in his native country will be prolonged beyond a month. His reception in Canada and the United States has been so thoroughly cordial, and the applications for lectures have been so numerous, that already he is fixed for many months' lecturing in the leading American centres during the 1885-86 season.

Mr. Samuel Putnam, of New York, is an intensely earnest enthusiast, and much that he writes is deserving of high commendation. He has just issued what he terms "Agnostic Poems," with a copy of which we have been favoured. We have read the pamphlet with interest, and also with disappointment. Mr. Putnam may rank himself as a Free-thinker ; but it is only fair to say that of Agnosticism, as we understand it, he knows comparatively little. Several of his poems, however, are characterised by considerable force and much beauty, and in a future issue of the *Agnostic* we may introduce to our readers a specimen of his verse.

In his "Newest Materialism" William Maccall says that "a man may be a bore without being a blockhead, and a blockhead without being a bore." It may, perhaps, be added that a man may be a fool without being either the one or the other—*ex. gr.*, when trying to paraphrase the depth of Paul and the tenderness of John in language suited to the ideas of the modern Philistine.

We distrust all things proffered to us as "simple," and thereby professedly acceptable ; for all things with which we are acquainted are manifold and complex.

The Agnostic:

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF LIBERAL THOUGHT.

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"Agnosticism simply means that a man shall not say he knows or believes that which he has no scientific grounds for professing to know or believe.....Agnosticism says that we know nothing of what may be beyond phenomena."—PROF. HUXLEY.

"I think that generally (and more and more as I grow older), but not always, an Agnostic would be the more correct description of my state of mind."—CHARLES DARWIN.

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THE AGNOSTIC.

JULY, 1885.

SORROW AND PAIN.

MIDWAY between the several gates of Life and Death there remains, for every one of us, a succession of wakings, colder in their revulsion than any interruption of natural slumber. Our idyllic dream is often broken : the more idyllic the dream, the sterner and harsher the waking reality ; the more finely touched the dreamer, the more unwelcome the daylight of the actual. These wakings mark the stages of our progress in the cold learning of experience. Our belief in Truth, it may be, suffers first ; then our belief in Love ; universal distrust possesses us inwardly, and at last, rising from uneasy, daylight slumber on a couch of withering flowers, we stand face to face with a dark and formless phantom, called by some the Spirit of Evil. From the date of this last fateful meeting many never recover wholly their former selves. The spell is broken ; we may smile, but never again guilelessly, as once we did. The remainder of life is consumed in fruitless effort to turn back to the childlike dream of the paradise-garden, or spent in endless reasonings to prove that the spectre of our waking moments is but a dream, and our former dreams the sole realities.

In this painful condition we are not without proffered relief. Briefly, this relief is of two kinds—a Religionist opiate, compounded for the purpose of dulling pain ; and a course of Materialistic tonics to brace the nerves, and so to help us to endure to the end. It is doubtful whether we should have recourse to either. Medicaments, under these circumstances, are unnatural. Can we not endeavour to face our most unwelcome waking without drugs ? Shall not that which is inevitable be met without flinching, and without the aid of borrowed strength, since it is but our lot, and happiness unbroken by no means our necessary birthright ?

We speak of the first-named remedy as an opiate drug. That "drowsy syrup" but defers the pain, prolongs our slumber only to produce a reaction again to be allayed. The evil we experience has, we are told, its root in ourselves, and is immedicable; but, if we will only consent to sip the cup of religious consolation, the agony will pass for the time, and can be again and always postponed until life shall end. After that there can be little doubt our dreams will not be so rudely broken.

The Materialistic treatment, on the other hand, is heroic, and suggests the actual cautery. Face the inevitable, we are told; do not doubt its actuality; but, instead of slumbering to gain a respite from the abhorred vision, pursue your search for similar spectres at all times, become accustomed to ghosts, and live on the best possible terms with them. You will be evilly tormented, of course—that is unavoidable; but, since this apparently easy-going world is, in reality, a vast chamber of torture, with cushioned seats at intervals, it is well to submit quietly, and even to steel yourself against its most cruel devices, by thrusting the fingers into them, by way of experiment.

With some individual variations, the above is the experience of most of us after facing the reaction-pain of broken faith, disappointed trust, the endless recession of the future life with its hopes, and the substitution, in the place of all these things wherewith we were comforted, of a set of silly promises—likest to a book of forfeits—or a series of hard, right-angled verities by which we are likely to be overwhelmed. It is not our purpose, however, wholly to condemn, although we may disapprove, either the Religionist or the Materialist in the matter of their several recommendations. We are mindful that every single case requires individual treatment: perhaps it may be allowed us to suggest that which our Agnosticism dictates in the matter, in the way of comparison. Take the Religionist first, and see how far we can provide for him.

Now, it is unquestionable that one who has been reared in the faith of Christianity, in the popular sense—one who has imbibed the draught of its consolations from his youth up, and who is an informed and not an educated believer, is far less susceptible to Agnostic influences, more especially in the hour of doubt and early trial, than any other mortal. The whole matter, with such an one, is simply one of exchange. Of what do you seek to deprive him? The answer need not be given in detail. We know his belief sufficiently well, and preface it accordingly with the *minus* sign. Let it be subtracted, and there remains his purely secular groundwork, which, as it is common to all of us, he necessarily retains. What do we give him? In place of the religious consolations of which we have bereft him, and by way of expressing our kindness:

and sincere pity for his lot, we present him (since he insists upon receiving something from us) with a neatly-bound copy of our joint reasonings upon the question of the Unknowable, and suggest that he fill up his leisure hours with a perusal of them. We also express the hope that these compositions may prove a very present help to him in his trials. The result is mutual disappointment. It may be that our Agnostic position is philosophically unassailable; but, then, our proselyte is no philosopher. Philosophy was not an "extra" or "specific subject" at the Board-school of his youth; and the end of the matter is that, even if we do persuade him to leave his former counsellors, take up his trial-cross, follow us, and receive our conclusions on trust, he may fairly enough compare the number and weight of his former teachers with his present ones, to our no small disadvantage. He left that which was much to him, although it cost him nothing, and he accepts in return that which, ponderably and measurably, is confessedly little. Yet we expect that, with the panoply of our Confession, the appropriate helmet of Nescience, and the Agnostic sword, which (of a truth) turneth every way, he will be enabled to fight the world, the flesh, and the mystery of evil. In fact, the last-named will vanquish him, even should he slay the other two.

With his educated Christian brother the case is different. Our presentation of the Creed of Existence is accepted or rejected upon higher grounds than that of Profit and Loss. The Pagan idea of reward does not so slavishly obtain. The question of gain, immediate or prospective, is not so rudely pushed to the front. Higher issues are at stake and are recognised. That the soul may *live*, if but for the lifetime of the instant, is more to the faithful soul than that it should vegetate for ever in the atmosphere of falsity—the wisdom of the truth more precious than the gems that make bright the fabled city of the heavens. Here we have something to work upon; here is the response which, in the former instance, is lacking. Carefully nourish and shelter that plant of divinest growth, the love of the true, and it will bring forth flower and fruit of immortality; prune and purge it, and it will evidence, in each of us, something nobler than passivity, something grander than endurance, a contemptuous scorn for all the pangs of broken faith and blighted love, even while reverently gathering up the scattered shards of both. The tortured spirit is more than conqueror, more than equal to, because above, either fortune.

With him who is Materialist, either by inheritance or by adoption, we have a greater advantage still, and this whether he be educated or base. We do not seek to deprive him of anything—he is so pitifully poor—but only to add to his store, because Materialists we also are in part. Now, the Materialist, pure and simple, has no recourse or reserve

whatever upon which he may fall back in the hour of trial, or in any other exigency. He has committed himself beforehand to this extremity. His means are mortgaged, infinitely and irrecoverably pawned at the imperious shrine of his idolatry. If everything has sprung from a clam-shell, then the ultimate appeal in default must lie to the interesting bivalve, which, of itself, can scarcely be expected to wipe the tear from every eye, or to yield any known comfort whatsoever to any one, save perhaps a doubtfully edible one. And, if the awful source of material origin be looked for elsewhere, the result is the same, however far the inquiry be pushed back, or however industriously prosecuted in the present. Neither telescope nor microscope can discover to us any comforter, so that the philosophy of Materialism, as to pain and sorrow, is that of stoical passivity alone. To this mood our Agnosticism, if adopted, brings a supplement, which, if it does not comfort, cannot harm. The Materialist who becomes Agnostic is, at all events, no poorer than before. His mud-specks remain to him, and all the oozy and slimy existences with which he loveth to assert his kinship. Only he knows, when once he is enlightened, that these are not all, and that, if there be any gospel, it is not to be found in them, or, indeed, in anything visible, however pretentious.

Without obtruding any so-called explanation of the existence of pain or sorrow in this world's lot, without even conceding that any explanation is either requisite or desirable, we may be permitted to observe that the assumption that the evil or painful element were desirably eliminated is a premature one. Never having existed in a painless world, we cannot tell whether such a sphere of being were desirable or not. Every one, more or less, has his dream of a happy, because faultless, future for the race; but these are glimpses, coloured with our own fancy, and not doing it much credit for the most part. It were possible for us all, living in our ideal Millennium, to be utterly worthless, utterly hopeless, in the very vacuity of peace, and to be seeking in vain for some plant of bitterness to season life, just as now we search for leaves of healing virtue.

Our Lady of Pain is even our sister; sorrow is closely akin to us: but evil, in the sense of sin, we know not. Sin is only the blank space which theologians, having invented a sinless God, cannot fill up and dare not leave unnamed. Imperfection there is—irregularity, variation (the net-work and lily-work on the garment-hem of the Everlasting)—but no sin, unless pain and sorrow be blended together to make it; in which case we are indeed sinners all. He loveth his God little who forsakes him because sin and pain abound—who would leave him, doubt his existence, or deny his righteousness, because the fount of tears (forsooth!) is not instantly dried. Yet upon this problem of evil.

existing in the creation of a supposed All-Pure, some have made shipwreck. It is, in truth, a perilous matter to image your Deity perfect to begin with, as well as almighty, and then to have to reconcile discovered imperfections with the omnipotent perfection. Is it not akin to the process of making the graven image first, and then falling down before it? Woe unto it indeed if, when made, adorned, and propitiated with sacrifices, there be found some malady the idol cannot heal, some sorrow from which it cannot save. We alone, godless in the eyes of some, yet, if God there be at all, not without very God of very God—we alone escape the riddle, not by evading answer, but by questioning its legitimacy. If pain, sorrow, and strife are to be justified and explained, to whom is the explanation to be given—who or what demands such a justification? Personally, we do not seek it, not having grasped the ultimate or resolved the unknowable. That others find the changes and chances of this life to be irreconcilable with their ideal highest does not concern us: with such idealisation we have nothing in common.

In a spirit equally removed from fretful submission, from angry rebellion, or from dull and stolid fatalism, we accept that which is without anger, distrust, or fear. There is an indifference which is careless and apathetic, born of sloth and blindness. There is also the indifference of despair, fronting the inevitable. Neither of these in the least comes near our position, based as it is upon experience, knowledge, love, pain, and sorrow, as upon broad foundations.

The life-journey—has it been joyous or sorrowful so far? Somewhat of both, it may be. At times the sun unclouded and the winds at rest; at others, storm and tempest and the stones and thorns afflicting the wearied feet. *Sursum corda!* It is but for a time: much repining may be out of season. At length, shall not we, and all others with us, comfort ourselves and return home to the Absolute?

G. M. McC.

HERBERT SPENCER'S PHILOSOPHY: AN EXPOSITION.

VII.

"FIRST PRINCIPLES."

THE ULTIMATES: THEIR PERMANENCE.

THAT we think in relations is a fact which Agnosticism recognises as fundamental. It was shown (Article III.) that things as they are in themselves—as they exist out of *relation* to consciousness—are perfectly unknowable. An analysis of the thought-product and an analysis of the thought-process alike disclosed nothing but *relations*; while a further examination proved that Life itself is merely a group of internal *relations* in correspondence with a group of external *relations*. Relations are divisible into two classes—relations of sequence and relations of co-existence. From a generalisation of all sequences we derive our conception of Time; and from a generalisation of all co-existences, our conception of Space. In thought, Time is represented as the abstract of a number of things that occur in succession; and Space, as the abstract of a number of things that exist simultaneously. Suppose we take a very concrete case.

A man is employed to enclose a garden-plot covering a certain area. The bricklayer begins his work on Monday by laying the foundation, and goes on adding brick to mortar and mortar to brick till Saturday comes round, when the last touch from his trowel completes the four walls.

Now observe what has happened. The laying of the first brick constituted the first occurrence in the chain of events which produced the enclosure; the laying of the second brick was the second occurrence; the laying of the third, the third occurrence; and so on. Between the laying of every two bricks a number of moments elapsed; between the laying of every two groups of bricks a number of hours elapsed; and between the laying of the first brick and the laying of the last a number of days elapsed. Here we have a number of successive happenings, occupying moments, hours, days. This series of events we call sequences, and from these sequences is derived our idea of Time.

Similarly, our idea of Space is derived from co-existences—*i.e.*, from a number of things existing, not one after another, but all together. The walls forming the enclosure are four co-existent positions, and that which is circumscribed by these co-existences is a certain portion of space. Without co-existences we could not conceive of Space. If now we take away two of the four walls, we have two remaining as co-existences, with a space between them. Demolish the third wall, and there are still the co-existences formed by the fourth wall and the houses on the opposite side of the street, and there is still the intervening space. Even abolish the remaining wall, and yet we have the co-existence of the buildings on one side of the street with those on the other, and consequently the space coming between. If, indeed, it were possible to annihilate all the buildings on the face of the globe, we could not thereby annihilate our idea of Space, since the terrestrial would be left to co-exist with the celestial, Space still surviving as the abstract of these co-existences.

As our conception of Space is that of co-existent positions which do not resist, so our conception of Matter is that of co-existent positions which do resist. "We think of Body as bounded by surfaces that resist, and as made up of parts that resist. Mentally extract the co-existent resistances, and the consciousness of Body disappears, leaving behind it the consciousness of Space. And since the group of co-existing resistant positions constituting a portion of Matter is uniformly capable of giving us impressions of resistance in combination with various muscular adjustments, according as we touch its near, its remote, its right, or its left side, it results that, as different muscular adjustments habitually indicate different co-existences, we are obliged to conceive every portion of matter as containing more than one resistant position—that is, as occupying Space. Hence the necessity we are under of representing to ourselves the ultimate elements of Matter as being at once extended and resistant: this, being the universal form of our sensible experiences of Matter, becomes the form which our conception of it cannot transcend, however minute the fragments which imaginary subdivisions produce." So we see that, while both Space and Matter possess extension, the latter offers resistance and the former does not.

Just as by the addition of the resistance-element to the extension-element we make up our conception of Matter, so by the addition of a third element we constitute our conception of Motion. In the idea of Motion are involved the ideas of Space, of Time, and of Matter. Motion implies a moving body, which occupies in succession a series of positions; and these successive positions necessitate a group of co-

existent positions. For example, a ball is fired from a cannon, and strikes against a stone wall. Motion, being change of place, cannot be thought of apart from the moving ball. In traversing the distance between the cannon and the wall the object occupies a series of positions in relation to surrounding objects, and a series of positions in relation to preceding and succeeding occurrences. Every instant during which the ball travels finds the moving body in a different position as regards the cannon from which it started, as regards the wall to which it is destined, and as regards the earth to which it is gravitating. Every instant finds, too, that the ball occupies a certain position in that line of event-succession which is never broken. Thus every instance of motion—every change of place—carries with it the idea of those co-existences from which we derive our conception of Space, as well as the idea of those sequences from which we abstract our conception of Time.

The third component of the conception of Motion is that the moving body must necessarily continue to change its place; and this is indeed the fundamental element. Like the other elements, this is elaborated from experiences of *force*.

Our conception of Matter, in its simplest shape, is that of co-existent positions which offer opposition to our muscular actions, and which, therefore, are directly present to our consciousness as so much *force*.

In like manner, a particular correlation of our own muscular energies, as indicating each original position, coupled with the resistance which makes us aware of that position, shows us that our idea of Space is constituted solely by experiences of *force*.

So experiences of *force* form the whole content of our consciousness of Motion. "Movements of different parts of the organism in relation to each other are the first presented in consciousness. Those produced by the action of the muscles necessitate re-actions upon consciousness in the shape of sensations of muscular tension. Consequently, each stretching-out or drawing-in of a limb is originally known as a series of muscular tensions, varying in intensity as the position of the limb changes. And this rudimentary consciousness of Motion, consisting of serial impressions of force, becomes inseparably united with the consciousness of Space and Time as fast as these are abstracted from further impressions of force. Or, rather, out of this primitive conception of Motion the adult conception of it is developed simultaneously with the development of the conceptions of Space and Time, all three being evolved from the more multiplied and varied impressions of muscular tension and objective resistance. Motion, as we know it, is thus traceable, in common with the other ultimate scientific ideas, to experiences of force."

Thus, then, we are brought irresistibly to Force, which is the ultimate of ultimates. Though Space, Time, Matter, and Motion are all necessary data of intelligence, yet every one of them is in a sense decomposable into experiences of Force. "Matter and Motion, as we know them, are differently-conditioned manifestations of Force. Space and Time, as we know them, are disclosed along with these different manifestations of Force, as the conditions under which they are presented. Matter and Motion are concretes built up from the *contents* of various mental relations; while Space and Time are abstracts of the *forms* of these various relations. Deeper down than these, however, are the primordial experiences of Force, which, as occurring in consciousness in different combinations, supply at once the materials whence the forms of relations are generalised and the related objects built up. A single impression of force is manifestly receivable by a sentient being devoid of mental forms: grant but sensibility, with no established power of thought, and a force producing some nervous change will still be presentable at the supposed seat of sensation.....Thus all other modes of consciousness are derivable from experiences of Force; but experiences of Force are not derivable from anything else;" and thus Force is the irreducible symbol to which all other symbols are reducible.

Force is really the inscrutable element of our knowledge. We may explain Space and Time in terms of Matter and Motion. We may explain Matter and Motion in terms of Force. But there are no terms in which we may explain Force. This is inexplicable.

These ultimate scientific ideas constitute the derivative data of the Agnostic Philosophy. What now is our conclusion respecting them? We conclude that Space, Time, Matter, Motion, and Force are all relative realities,* and are representative of an Absolute Reality which is alto-

* By a reality we mean a *something which persists in consciousness*. Persistence in consciousness is the only test by which we distinguish the real from that which we call the *unreal*. Between a mountain before us and the idea of such a mountain we discriminate by the fact that, whereas we are able to banish from consciousness the idea, and to replace it by another idea, we are not able, while it continues before us, to banish from consciousness the mountain. The idea vanishes, because it is not a reality; and the mountain persists, because it is a reality.

Hence we see that, reality being persistence in thought, it becomes a matter of indifference whether what we perceive be the Unknowable itself, or simply an effect always produced on us by the Unknowable. An effect continuously wrought upon us is just as real as would be the cause itself, if that could be cognised. For the cause could not be more, and the effect is not less, than permanent. Were Unconditioned Being itself perpetually present to the mind, it could not be more than persistent; and if, instead, there is perpetually present Being conditioned by the forms of thought, the one must be equally real with the other.

gether inscrutable. Each is a mode of the Unknowable, related as effect to cause. Each is a changeless relative reality involving a conception of the changeless Absolute Reality by which all are immediately produced.

Here, then, we plainly perceive how irresistible is that transfigured realism which is the goal of all criticism. Force, when stripped of all complications and regarded *per se*, inevitably compels us, through the relativity of our intelligence, vaguely to conceive of an unknown force as the correlative of the known force. Noumenon and phenomenon are thus seen in their primary relation of cause and effect. Admitting that the Knowable Effect is real because it persists in consciousness, we are bound to admit that the Unknowable Cause is no less real, since it is no less persistent.

That Force is persistent is a proposition involving the continuity of Motion and the indestructibility of Matter. Let us take the last first.

Unquestionably the current theology, in its dogmas concerning the end of the world, is permeated with the notion that Matter can be annihilated. But, if it could be proved that any particle of Matter might pass either from existence to non-existence or from non-existence to existence, then the foundations of Philosophy would crumble away. Science would have to deal with uncertain weights and quantities, which, not being fixed, could never be calculated and could never lead to definite conclusions. And if Science were impossible, Philosophy too, as the unifier of Science, would be impossible.

Quantitative chemistry, however, makes the eternity of Matter a certainty. Chemistry shows the combinations which various substances form, and the proportions in which they combine, and thus is able to account for every atom, both when it changes from visibility to invisibility and when it changes from invisibility to visibility. In its exact analyses Chemistry pursues a given quantity of matter through a number of states, and finally separates it, without a particle of gain and without a particle of loss. Chemistry knows much about transforming solids into liquids, and liquids into gases; but it knows nothing of annihilation and nothing of creation. And so Chemistry proves experimentally that Matter is fixed in quantity.

The converse of this is, indeed, not thinkable. "Conceive the space before you to be cleared of all bodies save one. Now imagine the remaining one, not to be removed from its place, but to lapse into nothing while standing in that place. You fail. The space which was solid you cannot conceive becoming empty, save by transfer of that which made it solid. Our inability to conceive Matter becoming non-existent is immediately consequent on the nature of thought. Thought consists in the establishment of relations. There can be no relation

established, and therefore no thought framed, when one of the related terms is absent from consciousness. Hence, it is impossible to think of something becoming nothing, for the same reason that it is impossible to think of nothing becoming something—the reason, namely, that nothing cannot become an object of consciousness.” The destructibility of Matter is inconceivable, for the same reason that the creatability of Matter is inconceivable. Matter may often vanish from the range of perception, but never from the range of space.

But by the eternity of Matter we really mean the eternity of the *force* by which Matter affects us. As we have seen, our ultimate conception of Matter is that of co-existent resisting positions; and we mean by the indestructibility of Matter the indestructibility of the resistance-power of these positions. In other words, the *force* which a certain amount of matter displays knows no increase and no decrease, but remains ever the same. Suppose that a man who, ten years ago, visited St. Peter’s Cathedral at Rome is again looking at the same gorgeous pile. How does he *know* that the structure viewed to-day is a continuation of the structure of a decade earlier? He knows it because the object which in past time produced on his mind a certain effect, still continues to produce a similar effect. The continuance of the *power* thus to impress him demonstrates the continuance of the object. Or suppose that, at the Bank of England, a cashier who has issued to a customer a hundred sovereigns is, on the return of the money, desirous of proving that no gold has been abstracted. What course does the cashier pursue? In order to convince himself that the value of the matter returned is precisely equivalent to the value of the matter issued, he proceeds to convince himself that the gravitative *force* of the former is precisely equivalent to the gravitative *force* of the latter. On placing the money brought back in the scales, he finds that the coins balance the same weight as that balanced by the coins given out, and he concludes that there has been neither loss nor gain. And this is his *sole* test. In these cases we see, as we see in all other cases, that the ultimate measure of Matter is Force, and that the indestructibility of Matter really means the indestructibility of Force. Being conscious of Matter solely through that resistance which it presents to our muscular activity, we are conscious of the permanence of Matter solely through the permanence of this resistance.

The continuity of Motion, like the indestructibility of Matter, is a factor with which Philosophy cannot dispense. If it could be proved that the motion of any mass or of any molecule is not continuous, if it could be proved that the motion of any atom may either proceed from nothing or lapse into nothing, then Motion would not admit of scientific

interpretation, and Philosophy, as the generaliser of scientific interpretations, would cease to exist.

The whole Earth on which we live, and every particle of Matter comprising it, are in continuous motion ; and precisely as there is never any interruption in the Earth's motion round its own axis, so there is never any interruption in the motion of each atom of which the Earth is composed. The sum-total of Motion, like the sum-total of Matter, is ever the same, never increasing and never decreasing. As Chemistry knows nothing of the creation or of the annihilation of one iota of Matter, so Physics knows nothing of the creation or of the annihilation of one iota of Motion.

Astronomy shows us that the planets revolve perpetually round the Sun, without losing any of their speed ; and every moving body would, if its motion were undisturbed, go on for ever without change of velocity. The reason why a body once set in motion eventually comes to rest is, not that the motion that impelled it has lapsed into nothing, but that the motion lost by the moving body has been communicated to surrounding bodies. Thus the motion, which to the unthinking appears to vanish into nothing, is simply transferred from one object to another.

A ball set in motion by kicking will glide much further over a sheet of ice than the same ball set in motion by the same force will glide over a plot of grass. Why is this? Because the ball has, in the former case, fewer small objects to which it must part with its motion. For the same reason a stone will travel a greater distance through a rare medium like air than through a dense medium like water. For the same reason, too, a spinning-top will continue in motion longer on a smooth surface than on a rough one.

Though Motion never ceases to exist, it often ceases to be visible. On ceasing to be visible, Motion sometimes appears in the form of sound, sometimes in the form of heat, and sometimes it re-appears to the eye in the form of light.

A blacksmith hammers a piece of iron till the metal becomes red-hot. The visible motion which ceases when the blacksmith ceases to strike is transferred to the iron, the particles of which it is composed moving to and fro with great rapidity. Although the piece of iron, as a mass, exhibits no motion, yet each particle rushes either backwards and forwards or round and round, so quickly as to produce the phenomenon of heat. So we see that a body, the parts of which are in rapid vibration, may be in motion without changing its place as a whole.

But sound is another mode of Motion. The moving particles of a vibrating body strike very rapidly against the air. When the air is struck it communicates motion to the air nearest to it, and this, in turn, strikes the air next to it ; and so on until the blow given to the air has travelled a long way. At last this blow reaches our ears and strikes us on the tympanum, and so we hear

a sound. Thus, after ringing a bell, and after the clapper has stopped, the motion which no longer appeals to the sense of sight does not disappear absolutely, but appeals to the sense of sound. Similarly, the motion of a thunder-clap, which affects the ear, re-appears as a flash of lightning, affecting the eye.

But even when Motion does not affect any of the senses, it still continues to exist. When it is not perceptible it must be latent. When it no longer takes the form of translation through space, or the form of sound, or of heat, or of light, Motion takes the form of *strain*. "When one who pushes against a door that has stuck fast produces, by great effort, no motion, but eventually, by a little greater effort, bursts the door open, swinging it back against the wall and tumbling headlong into the room, he has evidence that a certain muscular strain which did not produce translation of Matter through Space was yet equivalent to a certain amount of such translation. Again, when a railway-porter gradually stops a detached carriage by pulling at the buffer, he shows us that (supposing friction, etc., absent) the slowly-diminished motion of the carriage over a certain space is the equivalent of the constant backward strain put upon the carriage while it is travelling through that space.....When used as a plaything by boys, a ball fastened to the end of an india-rubber string yields a clear idea of the correlation between perceptible activity and latent activity. If, retaining one end of the string, a boy throws the ball from him horizontally, its motion is resisted by the increasing strain on the string; and the string, stretched more and more as the ball recedes, presently brings it to rest. Where now exists the principle of activity which the moving ball displayed? It exists in the strained thread of india-rubber.....When the ball has been arrested, the stretched string begins to generate in it an opposite motion, and continues to accelerate the motion until the ball comes back to the point at which the stretching of the string commenced—a point at which, but for loss by atmospheric resistance and molecular redistribution, its velocity would be equal to the original velocity. Here the truth that the principle of activity, alternating between visible and invisible modes, does not cease to exist when the translation through space ceases to exist is readily comprehensible, and it becomes easy to understand the corollary that, at each point in the path of the ball, the quantity of its perceptible activity, *plus* the quantity which is latent in the stretched string, yield a constant sum." Here, then, we reach the conclusion that the space-element of Motion is not, in itself, an existence. Change of place is the manifestation of an existence. When this existence ceases to manifest itself as translation, it begins to manifest itself as strain. And this activity, sometimes displayed by

translation, sometimes by strain, and frequently by both, is that which in Motion knows no break.

The continuity of Motion, however, like the indestructibility of Matter, is known to us only in terms of Force. The activity exhibited by Motion is the objective correlate of our subjective sense of effort. When we push or when we pull, when we stretch out a leg or when we draw in an arm, we have feelings which, in an abstract form, give us notions of resistance and of tension. So we see that Motion, which at one time appears as changing position and at another as unchanging strain, is in the last resort thought of as an equivalent of so much muscular exertion.

Clearly, then, the indestructibility of Matter and the continuity of Motion equally indicate the persistence of Force. The force by which Matter proves to us its perpetual existence, and the force by which Matter proves to us its perpetual action, alike demonstrate that Force is fixed in quantity. But, though the permanence of Matter and the permanence of Motion are provable in terms of Force, yet the permanence of Force is not provable in terms of anything else. The persistence of Force is, in fact, a truth which every science is bound to accept, but which no science can demonstrate. Could it be shown that one portion of force may be isolated from the main body of force, that one force could either begin in nothing or end in nothing, that action and re-action are not exactly equal, then all Science, and all philosophy which unifies science, would become a chaos. All the calculations and all the conclusions of Astronomy, of Chemistry, of Physics, of Mathematics, of Mechanics, are built upon the truth that the units of force are constant—are without diminution and without increase. Now, all calculations and all conclusions must rest upon some ultimate basis. As has been shown (Article III.), it is impossible to continue the process of including derivative truths in those wider truths from which they are derived, without coming to a widest truth which can be neither included in nor derived from any other. And when we reach the persistence of Force, which, as being the ultimate basis of Science, cannot be established by Science, we are compelled to postulate the persistence of Force as that widest of truths—as the truth transcending demonstration. So that the one truth which transcends knowledge by underlying it is the persistence of Force. This, having its cause in the Unknowable and its effect in the Knowable, must be the foundation-stone of that superstructure which we call the Agnostic Philosophy, and which has for its object the complete unification of the knowable effects of the unknowable cause.

What, then, is the force of which we declare persistence? It can-

not be the force known in our muscular exertions, for that force does not persist in consciousness. When an outstretched limb is relaxed the force which was displayed in the stretching vanishes. But, though the force, as soon as it ceases to exist in consciousness, begins to exist out of consciousness, yet, in existing out of consciousness, it does not exist in a form knowable by us, and must, as far as we are concerned, be non-existent. Force as it is out of consciousness cannot be force as known to us. It follows that the force which we affirm to be persistent is that Absolute Force vaguely perceived by us as the necessary correlate of the force we know. By the persistence of Force, therefore, we mean the persistence of some Cause transcending our knowledge. In postulating this we postulate an Unconditioned Reality, without beginning and without end. Hence, by a very different method, we arrive at the very same ultimate truth as that with which we set out in the preceding Section—the truth in which Religion and Science merge. “On examining the data underlying a rational Theory of Things, we find them all at last resolvable into that datum without which consciousness was shown to be impossible—the continued existence of an Unknowable as the necessary correlative of the Knowable.” This is the conclusion enforced alike by an ultimate analysis and by an ultimate synthesis.

In closing this brief exposition of the derivative data of Agnosticism, we cannot do better than epitomize.

In the last paper we reached the final result, that the manifestations of the Unknowable are separable into the two great divisions of self and not-self. In the present article we find that these two classes of phenomena are re-groupable into Space, Time, Matter, Motion, and Force, each of which has its subjective side as well as its objective side. We find, further, that these secondary segregations, no less than the primary ones, are real, because they persist in consciousness ; and that they are permanent, because they are both uncreatable and indestructible.

IGNOTUS.

GEOLOGICAL EPOCHS.

THE relation of the Revisers of the Authorised Version to their work and to the public is not inaptly prefigured by a well-known fable of Æsop, entitled "The Old Man and his Ass." Or, perhaps, we had better seek an illustration less irreverently suggestive. A skilled surgeon, whose professional education has been supplemented by wide experience and deep research, is required to perform a delicate and complex series of operations, involving a near approach to vital parts. But it is stipulated that he must act under the supervision of an ancient lady, very tender of heart, but knowing nothing whatever about the structure and functions of that or of any other organ. She shrieks at every incision; she is quite sure that it cannot be right to cut away the diseased flesh, or, at any rate, *all* of it; she thinks, for her own part, that so much meddling with Nature, and prying into what was meant to be secret, does more harm than good. She has an unexpressed idea that surgery, like art, is improper. And so the surgeon does as much as she will allow; furtively trying to deceive her Argus eyes and to do a little more.

The Revisers are in nearly as sad a predicament as our supposititious operator: their own consciences can scarcely be appeased by the marginal notes, nor have they entirely satisfied that theological Mrs. Grundy, whom we may call "Traditional Reverence."

This paper, however, is not intended to be a dissertation on the merits and shortcomings of the Revised Version. I only mean to take a text, and then to wander away from it with that delightful freedom which is allowed both to clerics and to critics. Probably all readers have turned with interest to the first chapter of Genesis, and, after noting that "waste" is substituted for "without form," in the description of the inchoate earth, have passed on to the next striking emendation: "And there was evening and there was morning, one day." That is my text.

Now, I do not wish to revive the miserable suit of "*Moses versus Geology*." The so-called "reconciliation" of Scripture with Science is a branch of special pleading admitting of much perverted ingenuity, and probably there will be advocates ready to take up the discredited cause so long as any can be found who will listen and reply. In matters theological a very little reason goes a very long way, and the British

juryman is not especially careful in considering his verdict when "Guilty" or "Not Guilty" will involve no secular consequences; nothing, in fact, save Heaven or Hell. We need not wonder, then, that he has been contented to read the word "day" as signifying "epoch," or "cycle," and yet to find in the seventh day, when God rested "from all his work which he had made," a precedent for Sabbatarianism. But this assumption, so calmly made by (or rather *for*) the British juryman, affords food for serious thought as to his conceptions of Geology. Let us suppose that he is an intelligent specimen of his class, and that he has studied the subject in popular manuals, and perhaps a little in the field. He has been much interested in what he has read and seen, and the ideas he has formed are clear, pictorial, and dramatic. The successive "periods" pass before him like scenes in a tragedy, each having a definite beginning, middle, and end. Each, therefore, is fairly comparable to a day, brightening from morning till perfect noon, gradually dimming towards evening, and lost at last in night. Nothing could be more beautiful or more complete. There was a time, he will tell you, when the area which is now Europe was submerged beneath the sea. Shell-fish, strange tripartite Crustaceans, corals, and other branching organisms bearing flower-like cups, were the chief inhabitants of the waters. These were enshrined and preserved in strata of sand and gravel and mud, since consolidated into hard grey rocks. This period passed away with the life thereof; and then came the dawn of another age—an age of inland lakes, of estuaries, of shallow, brackish seas. Then flourished gigantic ferns and horse-tails and club-mosses, luxuriant conifers and cycads; while the seas were peopled by fishes covered with bony scales. Insects and other "creeping things" came into being, and near the margin of the lakes enormous toads disported themselves. Red sands were laid down in the morning and in the evening of the cycle; but the noon saw the forests and jungles and reedy deltas, which, in the process of time and of decay, formed our coal measures.

Yet another epoch dawned. Lizards, twenty feet long, paddled through the sea like fishes, raising long, slender, swan-like necks above the waters. Others flew through the air with bat-wings; and, at last, there appeared a genuine bird with feathers, retaining teeth and a peculiarly-constructed tail as reptilian reminiscences. Mammals, too, there were, chiefly or wholly marsupial. The materials deposited were very various—clays, sands, and limestones; and great beds of chalk were formed from the shell-like coverings of tiny animalculæ.

Next came a period when genera, and even species of plants and animals which survive at the present day, grew more and more abundant. An antiquated type of horse gradually made way for forms approximating to his living representative; the pachyderms and the ruminants

began to diverge from a common stock ; birds and insects multiplied. The plants assumed a more familiar aspect ; traces remain of the fig, the maple, the hickory, even of the water-lily and buck-bean. In these times the Alps were upheaved ; the continent of Europe assumed something of its present shape ; but its climate was tropical, slowly declining towards the eventide of the secular day.

Our modern times were ushered in by a glacial age. Europe was covered with a great sheet of ice down to the fiftieth parallel of latitude. Britain, as far south as Bristol, was glaciated as Greenland is now. After the ice-sheet had retired man appeared, living at first in dens and caves of the earth, and using implements of rough stone ; but gradually learning to build houses and to forge tools of bronze and iron.

Such is a fair outline of the geological ideas which our intelligent Briton may be expected to form. If he goes out into the field, he finds them confirmed. Where deposition has gone on with little or no interruption, the formations overlie each other evenly, which he interprets as evidence of geological daytime. When deposition has ceased for a time, and the rocks have been upheaved and partly worn away in the interval, the newer strata will lie on the edges of the older ones, and this, perhaps, he will consider as the record of a geological night. It is true that the "periods" which I have described do not correspond in their essential characters with the "days" of Genesis ; but every Sunday-schoolboy ought to know that nothing is impossible with a commentator. By judiciously dividing and ingeniously suppressing and supposititiously supplementing, and otherwise manipulating the testimony of the rocks, he can force them to repeat a tale which, at first hearing, may seem to bear out his theory. But let not the jurors make up their minds till they have heard the cross-examination.

What, then, do these geological "periods" represent ? But, before trying to answer this question, let me mark the lines on which our investigation and reasoning must proceed. Every one, whether bent upon reconciling reason with "revelation," or convinced that such reconciliation is impossible, must accept at least the broad principles on which are founded all sober scientific theories ; otherwise he puts himself outside the pale of argument, and can hope for no hearers save the fantastic and the ignorant. We start from the truism that like effects are produced by like causes, with its corollary, that if, in our experience, a certain phenomenon is always preceded by a certain process, we are right in assuming, wherever we find the phenomenon, that the process has taken place. If we walk on the seashore at low tide, and pick up shells and seaweed, we are quite sure that they have been brought there by the sea, though they are now many yards above its margin. We know, too, that the sea has rounded these pebbles which

now lie high and dry, and has laid down this smooth yellow sand. If we were told that the seaweed had originally grown in a garden, or that the pebbles had been polished by a lapidary, who had afterwards scattered them about for his own amusement, we should entertain a strong private opinion as to the sanity of our informant. Just in the same way, we are obliged to interpret geological phenomena by the every-day processes which we see going on around us. Following this clue, we find that water has been the chief agent in the formation of the stratified rocks. In the form of rain and rivers, it bears away the materials of the land and lays them on the floor of the sea in horizontal beds. Marine animals and plants die, and fall to the bottom, and are imbedded in the sand or mud, which sometimes preserves their harder parts from decay, and sometimes keeps only their impress. The remains of the animals and plants of the land may also be washed out to sea; but these will more often be found in lakes and in river-beds. On the other hand, rocks exposed to the air will receive little fresh material, and will gradually be worn away and carried out to sea, the softer rocks yielding the sooner. Any organic relics which they may contain will be destroyed by the action of wind and weather, or removed far from their original home. Roughly speaking, then, we may say that times of deposition have been times of submergence. Such submergence has never been general. Depression in one part involves elevation in another. Earth movements are constantly in progress, and they are usually slow and imperceptible, often amounting only to a few inches in a century. Violent convulsions are the exception, not the rule; and, though small islands may occasionally be born of volcanic action, the great continents are produced by gradual folding of the earth-crust. Thus the greater part of the Scandinavian peninsula, at the present time, is slowly rising. Deep-sea corals, killed by being carried up into shallower and warmer waters, have been found in Christiania fiord; and the pines on the edges of the Norwegian snow-fields are dying from the increased cold consequent on elevation. In Cornwall, and on both sides of Scotland, old sea beaches are found at various distances inland. These are proofs of upheaval, while depression is proved by the remains of submerged forests, and by those long, narrow inlets of the sea called fiords, which terminate inland in glens, and are nothing else than submerged river-valleys.

When Europe lay under deep sea, in Silurian times, a great continent stretched north and south through the middle of what is now the Atlantic Ocean. What was the life of this continent we cannot tell; we can scarcely even guess its general character, as the most westerly part of Europe now elevated must have lain too far to the east to receive any organic *débris* from the shores. Yet there can be no doubt that

abundant life was nourished on the dry land of this "buried Atlantis," as well as in the deep ocean of our present dwelling-place. Again, there is a great biological chasm between the red sandstones which cover the coal and those immediately overlying them. The beds are similar in colour and texture; but the fossils in the lower seem like memories of an old *régime*—those in the upper like promises of a new. Does this great gulf signify that life was absent? Is it the record of a secular night, when no fresh forms came into being, and when the generating forces of Nature were dormant? No, we cannot question that the process of evolution was unbroken in this time, as in others; but, owing to the elevation and denudation of the land, no remains have been preserved. The new types which appear in the Trias did not start into life with the dawn of a new day; they were the children of lost species, of whose existence we may be confident, although they died and left no sign.

What, then, is the conclusion of the whole matter? It is this: The earth's history is a mutilated book, with far more gaps than pages. Here whole sheets are gone; there the very half-page is torn out which might have explained the whole. But what is left gives evidence that the narrative was continuous, and that rough handling, not disconnected writing, is answerable for its present fragmentary condition. The conception of a "geological period" is a mere fiction, convenient for purposes of retention and classification, but not expressing any actual truth. The time of greatest change and most vigorous vitality in any special region may often be unrepresented in its strata; and the higher vertebrates, from their terrestrial habits, will generally be more scantily preserved than lower forms. Our chronology rests chiefly on molluscan remains; and, could the evolutionary history of some higher forms of life be taken as the standard, the "periods" might present a very different aspect; but in no case should we find any mornings and evenings, any night, or any time of Sabbatic rest. The line of Nature is an ascending spiral, in which we can trace no beginning and can foresee no end—a succession of curves, interrupted by no angle. Constant activity, ceaseless play of Protean forces, is now, and ever has been, the law of life.

C. N.

THE POPULAR RELIGIOUS FAITH.

THE DOCTRINE OF DESIGN—(*Continued*).

THAT the doctrine of Design may be a proof of wisdom, it must be shown that the same design in all cases answers the same wise end. Watches are made to show the time ; but, if half the watches made fail to do so, it would show a terrible lack of skill either in the design or in the maker. So also, if a given arrangement, claimed as a proof of wise design, answers in some cases and not in others, it certainly is no proof of unerring skill and divine wisdom.

Let us take an example—the structure of birds as an adaptation to their flight in air. There are wings instead of fore-legs or arms. The limb itself is similar in all three cases. The articulation of the shoulder is alike ; and, what is more remarkable still, the upper joint in all three cases contains one bone, and the lower joint two.

But now comes in a deviation which, we are told, is a triumphant mark of design. The fore legs of a quadruped and the arms of a man are not suited for buoying the body upwards into the high air ; but, as birds were designed to move through the air, their wings are covered with quills and feathers ; and, to render the proof of design more certain, when a bird rows its way through the air it actually “feathers” its wings, as a rower feathers his oars. In the downward stroke the wings are spread forth to their widest extent, to obtain the greatest possible resistance ; but, in the upward stroke, they are so twisted as to cut the air sidewise, and thus secure the least resistance. This wise mechanical contrivance not only diminishes the muscular exertion required of the bird, but reduces to a minimum the obstruction to its flight. Here, then, we are told, is undeniable proof of design. But this is not all : the very bones of birds are air-tubes—much lighter than the bones of animals which walk the earth. The lungs, too, have a faculty wholly unknown in quadrupeds and man—that is, a power of communicating with the cavities of the body, so that the bird can puff itself out at pleasure, like a blown bladder ; in which state, bulk for bulk, it becomes lighter and more buoyant. Lastly, birds do not carry their young, like quadrupeds and the human species, but breed by means of eggs ; and though their broods may vary from two to a score, these eggs are,

deposited only one at a time. If, on the other hand, the female bird had to carry all her brood about with her, this great additional weight would seriously impede, if not wholly obstruct, her powers of flying.

Can any one doubt for a moment that all this peculiar structure is a proof of design? Can any one doubt that these wings, these air-tube bones, these lungs, and this extraordinary exemption from gestation were intended to assist the flight of birds? It is absolutely impossible not to see in this a means to an end; and, seeing it, not to acknowledge design and the wisdom of a designer.

Softly; not so fast, prithee. Leave your *Iô Triumphe* till you are out of the wood. Is all this so very satisfactory, so very certain? Let us see:—All birds do not fly. Hosts of birds cannot even raise themselves from the earth by their wings, to say nothing of winging their way through fields of air. They have the same apparatus, the same structure; but the machine won't work, the watches won't go. Like Hodge's razors, they won't shave.

None of the *brevipennes* are capable of flying—such as the ostrich, the cassowary, the rhea, the emu, the now extinct dodo of the Mauritius, and the moa of New Zealand. The cassowary can in nowise even lift itself from the ground with its wings, nor even use its wings, like the ostrich, duck, or goose, to aid in running. The dodo most certainly was not a flying bird. Probably the *dinornis* genus, now wholly extinct, had solid bones: be this, however, as it may, it most certainly had no power of lifting itself on its wings.

Wings, without doubt, are sometimes used for flying, and so are fingers for killing flies; but, probably, if all the winged animals were polled, the number of those which have wings and can *not* fly would not fall short of those which can use their wings for flight; and certainly, in the insect world, there are myriads of winged creatures which never use their wings to carry them through the upper air.

We will not rest on one genus of birds, the *brevipennes*, but meet the question boldly and fully, freely and fearlessly. Look at the whole family of long-winged birds, with tubular bones, lungs communicating with the cavities of their body, and propagating their species by eggs: how many are, nevertheless, wholly incapable of flying? Witness our swans, our geese, our ducks, our turkeys, our guinea fowls, our domestic poultry. They can manage to hop to a perch at night, but make no attempt to emulate the swallow and the lark, the eagle and the hawk. Now, then, if the tubes of thin bones filled with air, lungs communicating with the cavities of the body, the propagation of their kind by eggs, and the feathers of wings—if these things, in birds of flight, are a triumphant proof of wisdom in design; if these things demonstrate means to an end; if they speak, trumpet-tongued, of one who works

and never misses his aim, then these tubular bones and lungs and egg-layings and wings in birds which *cannot* fly are a triumphant proof of a great mistake—a means for an end, which end is not effected. If the plumage and wings and lungs of swallows and sparrows are proof of a designing mind because they are adapted to their flight in air, then the plumage and wings and lungs of brevipennes, swans and geese, ducks and turkeys, are a proof that the designing mind has failed in his design. One watch will keep time ; another will not do so. The former may be a proof of skill, but the latter is no less a proof of failure ; and I fancy that a workman who makes razors which won't shave does not stand high in the cutlery trade.

It is the common cant of the popular faith that God does nothing in vain. Every bullet, we are told, has its billet. Every work is exactly adapted to its end, and the wisest economy is shown throughout all creation. I must candidly confess that I cannot see this. It appears to me that we are surrounded with examples to the contrary. I was walking through a large oak forest a few days ago. Probably there were fifty thousand oaks or more. A warder joined me, and in conversation he said that an acorn hardly ever sows itself.

In this forest many tons of acorns must be grown every year, yet may you wander about this vast forest and find scarcely a single seedling. The acorns are the eggs of the oak : they are meant to propagate the tree ; but not one in a million does so. They fall to the ground, like leaves in autumn, and rot into vegetable mould. Is this economy ? Is this an example of a billet to every bullet ? Is this means to an end ? A man makes watches as time-pieces, and not for road metal ; and, if they are employed for repairing roads, it would be a scandalous waste, and a perversion of their legitimate design. Acorns are an ingenious contrivance of seed-oaks ; but if, instead of growing into trees, they rot into dung, it is like mending highways with watches. It is not alone in acorns that we see this perversion ; the same meets us wherever we look. A carp or herring deposits many myriads of eggs ; but not one in a thousand becomes a herring or a carp.

I am not contending that it would be better or wiser if every acorn became an oak, and all the spawn of fish developed into its kind. That is not the question before us. The contention is this : that means to an end show design, and design points to a designer. If the adaptation is outspoken, it proclaims wisdom and skill. The works of Nature, we are told, exhibit this wise adaptation in all things, and, therefore, sing, with angel voices, "the hand that made us is divine." This is the position of Paley, and those who think with him. Our reply is this : The works of Nature, no doubt, exhibit a wise adaptation to certain ends, but do not, for the most part, answer those ends : thus acorns and

the roe of fish are adapted to propagate oaks and fishes, but 999 of every 1,000 fail to do so. Wings and air-tube bones, and lungs which may inflate the body, are adapted to flying ; but the birds which cannot fly are about as numerous as those which can. If adaptation to an end, when that end is accomplished, shows economy without waste, wisdom and skill in the designer, then adaptation to an end, when that end is *not* attained, shows waste without economy, and an utter failure of wisdom and skill. A watch that keeps time speaks the praise of the watchmaker ; but a watch that will not go is either a knavish trick or the work of a bungler. So, again, if watches, designed for time-pieces, are thrown wholesale on the highways as road metal, it is skill wasted and perverted, and is anything but a proof of economy and wisdom.

JULIAN.

(To be continued next month.)

A DIRGE.

THE long, long day, to its close is tending,
Down to the West is the sun descending ;
The ripened corn for the reaper is calling,
The mellow fruit from the boughs is falling ;
The bright must fade and the strong must bend—
To each a beginning, to all an end.

See the day of man's life declining,
Gone is the morn and the noon-day shining ;
The stooping frame of decay is telling,
The once firm spirit of age's quelling ;
The limbs are feeble, the strength is dry,
The breath comes slowly, the man must die !

Mourn not for him, though fast he's fading,
Mourn not, the unheeding powers upbraiding ;
Till the hour of his birth he felt no sorrow,
He shall know no pang beyond to-morrow.
Peaceful he's smiling ; he soon will rest
In his long, long sleep in the quiet earth's breast.

MARMADUKE HENRY.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF UNBELIEF.

WHILE there can be no reasonable doubt as to the rapid increase of unbelief in all phases of modern life, differences of opinion may obtain as to the nature and authority of this unbelief. For instance, it may be asked, Can unbelief have a philosophy? According to the majority of men who have been trained in what is termed orthodoxy, and who profess to accept the popular teachings of the Christian faith, the answer would be a most emphatic negative. But the impartial observer of the development of modern thought will doubtless think otherwise, and consider that he has ample reasons for the conclusion at which he has arrived. If there is a philosophy of belief, why should there not be a philosophy of unbelief? The one may be true and the other false, still both may be formulated in philosophic terms. Unbelief has been so long branded as a crime, and so persistently looked upon as a sin against God and as an enemy to all human society, that the world has come largely to argue—irrational though it is in the highest degree—that it has no philosophic basis. Ever and anon it is being declared from the thousands of pulpits in the land that unbelief is the great bane of the age, and that what mankind needs is more faith in dogmas, at which an orthodox preacher himself declared “Reason stands aghast and Faith herself is half confounded.” Unbelief is not only condemned as being a crime, but it is pronounced as the very worst of crimes. The Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, who is deemed by many persons as being no mean authority on orthodox questions, exclaims in pious fervour: “Talk of decrees, I will tell you of a decree, ‘He that believeth not shall be damned.’ That is a decree and statute that can never change. Be as good as you please, be as moral as you can, be as honest as you will, walk as uprightly as you may; there stands the unchangeable threatening, ‘He that believeth not shall be damned.’” This is a sample of orthodox teaching in Christian England in this glorious nineteenth century—this age of progress, of civilisation and culture. The unbeliever is viewed as a man who voluntarily or wilfully rejects the light of truth, who clings to error knowing it to be evil, and who consequently deserves no mercy of any God, and no considerations on the part of his fellow man. The very name Unbeliever or Sceptic is looked upon as a byword or reproach; and the term Infidel, with many people, has

a more horrible meaning than that of thief or murderer. To quote again from Mr. Spurgeon: "Could you take murder and blasphemy and lust and adultery and fornication, and everything that is vile, and unite them into one vast globe of black corruption, they would not equal the sin of unbelief. This is the monarch sin, the quintessence of guilt, the mixture of the venom of all crimes, the dregs of the mine of Gomorrah; it is the *AI* sin, the masterpiece of Satan, the chief work of the Devil." Unbelief is a sort of intellectual bugbear by which the simple-minded are held in the worst kind of slavery—that of intellectual bondage. Whenever a man begins to think differently from the Church a hue-and-cry of "Infidelity" is raised against him, and many are compelled, if they would preserve their positions in business and retain the good opinion of their fellow men, to retrace their footsteps and enter again the fold of believers, where doubt comes not and where inquiry has no place. For let a man be guided by the dogmas of antiquity, declare that reason is a blind guide and logic a weapon of the Devil; let him denounce with all the power he can command the great and illustrious men of the earth who have doubted the various theologies of the world, and such a man's respectability is safe in the world, and his salvation is regarded as being secured in the next. "Only believe," says the poet of Methodism—

"Only believe, your sins forgiven;
Only believe, and yours is heaven."

No man can believe everything, and he must consequently be an unbeliever in all that which does not fall within the range of his thought. Want of faith, therefore, so far from being criminal, is a necessary condition of the human mind. No one can escape it, do what he may. The Christian is an unbeliever to the Mohammedan, the Buddhist, the Parsee, and other religious devotees, as they are all unbelievers to him and to each other. The question here is not which of these systems, or whether any one of them, is true; but the point to be observed is that the advocate of each disbelieves in the dogma of the other, showing that unbelief is a necessity, since the various faiths are all in some respects antagonistic. When Scepticism is denounced as a crime it is invariably implied that the unbelief has a reference to some particular form of faith, which it is assumed is true. But this is, in the first place, to use the term in far too wide a sense, and to include in it a sweeping condemnation of the opinions of others, which the legitimate meaning of the word certainly does not justify; and, in the second place, it is to assume that the special faith to which the unbelief is antagonistic is well founded. This may or may not be so; but the use of the word unbelief does not warrant the assumption. Let the

question in the general sense be put to any man, "Are you an unbeliever?" and he will be bound to reply in the affirmative. And the fact that each religionist, when he uses this word in an opprobrious sense, has always in view his own peculiar faith as that which it is criminal to doubt, shows clearly the narrowness of his creed, the intolerance of his views, and his reckless habit of assuming that which should in every case be a matter of reason and of proof. The Agnostic is, of course, an unbeliever; but is any Christian minister in the world less so? As the great Lord Shaftesbury once remarked: "The best Christian in the world, who, being destitute of the means of certainty, depends only on history and traditions for his belief in these particulars, is at best but a Sceptic Christian." The fact is, both the Agnostic and the Christian disbelieve in what the other teaches. Why, then, does the Christian consider himself justified in applying to the Agnostic an epithet which is used in an offensive sense, and resent the same epithet when applied to himself? The Christian, no doubt, will reply that his opinions are true, and those of the Agnostic false. But that is just the point in dispute, and has no right to be assumed; and, besides, might not the Agnostic justify the use of the word in the same way? Only infallibility, which the orthodox believer does not claim in words—although his actions would often seem to belie his words—could justify his attitude in this matter. Indeed, it is doubtful whether infallibility itself would prove a justification, unless such infallibility were universally recognised, and in that case, of course, there would no longer be any dispute. In the absence of such a recognition, the infallibility would be quite as much a matter of proof as anything else, and he who doubted it would do so for reasons of his own, which would be as much entitled to respect as the opinions of him who was enlisted on its side.

Before unbelief, even in religion, can be dispensed with advantageously—and even then, perhaps, it could not rationally be discarded—three qualifications must be shown to be possessed by the believer who talks in the language of ordinary Christian men. First, he must be infallible; secondly, he must be strictly honest, for infallibility does not necessarily imply honesty; and thirdly, his system must be perfect. In the absence of any one of these, he may mislead those who listen to and follow his teaching. And no man can possibly have a right to proclaim a system, which he demands to have accepted under pain of penalties in this world, and worse penalties in some world to come, unless he is prepared with demonstrative proof that he and his system are possessed of these three qualifications. With regard to the first, no man can profess seriously to claim infallibility but the Pope of Rome; and his claim is not only not attempted to be made good, but we are told that it must be accepted without any proof whatever. Besides, half

the Christians themselves not only dispute this claim, but denounce it in language as strong as that which they apply to unbelievers. In fact, infallibility can only exist in connection with Omniscience, because to be certain that one could have made no mistake it is essential that he should have a perfect knowledge of everything that is in any and every part of the universe. If there be any one fact or circumstance with which he is unacquainted, this very fact or circumstance may contain an additional truth not present to his mind, which, if known, would considerably modify existing views.

The Protestant, however, does not even pretend to claim infallibility, and, therefore, quite unconsciously, although very rationally, foregoes a great part of his authority. With him the certainty of being right is transformed to some extent from the individual to the system, and hence, although personally he lays no claim to being infallible, he still demands implicit faith in his teachings. Infallibility in his case is not in his own mind, nor in the head of his Church, but in his text-book. The Bible, he declares, cannot err, although he can. But, even if this claim were established, it would not be sufficient, since it is not required as a substitute for personal infallibility, but in addition to it. An infallible book would be of little value without an infallible interpreter, because a million different fallible minds will deduce a million different conclusions, nine hundred and ninety thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine of them being erroneous—and, perhaps, the other one also—which multiplies the chances of error so extensively that the alleged infallibility disappears. But to claim infallibility for the Bible is really to claim it for the writers of the various books which make up that volume, and the same argument holds good against its possession by them as by the Pope of Rome or any other human being. And, again, supposing that the infallibility of the original version of the Bible were conceded, nothing would be thereby gained, since such an infallible original is no longer in existence. The volume that we have is simply a translation from the Greek executed by fallible, erring men. And the Greek original is but a copy of a copy each time copied, giving rise to the possibility for error, inasmuch as the copyists were far from being infallible. Thus the first qualification necessary to the disposal of unbelief we find to be absent. The second is that such teachers must be honest. If this quality were lacking, we could not be quite sure whom we might trust even among infallible men. It is only stating a well-known truism to say that all men are not honest, particularly in theological matters—a fact which is patent to most persons, and sometimes to their cost. Insincerity is the great curse of the Church, too many of its members endeavouring to make people think they believe creeds and doctrines in which, in reality, they have no practical faith whatever. Unless, there-

fore, we could be quite certain, beyond a shadow of a doubt, as to the conscientious honesty of the infallible teacher, even his infallibility would prove of no avail. In business matters men always endeavour to act upon the principle that honesty is a most important element in life. They will not, as a rule, trust a dollar in the hands of another person, unless thoroughly convinced both of his honesty and of his capability to comply with the terms of the agreement made. Yet these same men will stake their all in what they term hereafter—the supposed eternal welfare of their souls—on the *ipse dixit* of a priest or minister, without any guarantee of his honesty or competence to perform his brilliant promises. Truly man is a remarkable being, and, under the influence of theology, his ways are marvellously strange and past finding out. The very course which he applauds in secular transactions he not only ignores in religious proceedings, but adopts the very opposite. And yet we are told that the two lines of conduct—secular and religious—are harmonious. In spite of all reckless condemnation to the contrary, unbelief is a necessity of the human mind, to escape which is altogether impossible.

There is but one state of mind in which it may be said unbelief can have but little or no place, and that is in a condition of total ignorance. Perfect knowledge would, of course, remove all unbelief of truth; but even with it there would be unbelief as it regards error. But, as this condition is unattainable, it need not be discussed. Total ignorance does not disbelieve, because there is, in that case, nothing present to the mind in reference to which unbelief can be exercised. This will go a long way to explain the fact that, in times of supreme ignorance, unbelief was comparatively unknown. Priestcraft held its sway, mental stagnation obtained, and men and women were blind believers in, and followers of, the then prevailing errors. But the moment progress, from the condition of ignorance, commenced, new forms of thought became present to the mind, new opinions were perceived, new theories sprung up, investigation took place, and unbelief became a necessary consequent. And this unbelief will be sure to increase with increasing knowledge. In childhood the first impressions we receive we naturally enough imagine to be indisputably correct, whether in religion, in philosophy, or in the ordinary commonplace affairs of life. The first impressions as to religion and philosophy we receive from our parents or teachers, and hence tradition frequently deceives us. As Dryden says :—

“ By education most have been misled,
 So we believe because we so were bred ;
 The priest continues what the nurse began,
 And thus the boy imposes on the man.”

The early impressions as to human duty we acquire from certain creeds and fallacies—observations of sense when semi-knowledge misleads us and induces us to form very erroneous views as to the nature and object of the duties of life. We are unconscious followers of Reid, with this difference, that, as infants, we do not know what philosophy is, and hence we have no particular antipathy to it; while the Scotch metaphysician, having a knowledge of philosophy, nevertheless preferred what he termed—perhaps absurdly—common sense, and thus speaks of their respective merits: “I despise philosophy and renounce its guidance; let my soul dwell with common sense.” We are ignorant, in the morning of existence, of all distinctions between essences and properties. The attributes of the various material bodies with which we come in contact are, to our untutored minds, part and parcel of the things themselves, and it never occurs to us to make any attempt to separate them. But further knowledge reveals to us a wide distinction between qualities and that in which they inhere as attributes; and we also learn that our own perceptions give a deep colouring to all that is perceived—that, in fact, our own concepts are the only things of which, really, we have true knowledge at all. Theories in abundance crowd in upon the mind, the major part of them only to be speedily dismissed as untenable, and we become, perforce of necessity, unbelievers to much that is presented to the mind. Each individual will probably accept some different theory to the others; but all will be unbelievers in those notions which have been rejected. In theology the case is very much the same: our early impressions are speedily discovered to be immature, to say the least, and they have to be largely modified. Much that comes before us has to be rejected as utterly untenable, and we are unbelievers, whether we will or no. We shall, of course, not all arrive at the same views; but that will make no difference to the fact of our unbelief, since each will disbelieve that which does not accord with his own deductions; and hence he becomes an unbeliever in all that is opposed to the conclusions at which he has arrived. This unbelief will deepen with increasing knowledge, because, the more we know, the greater the variety of the theories that will present themselves to the mind, and the larger, therefore, the number of these that will have to be rejected. It will follow, as a necessary consequence, that the unbelief will be commensurate with the knowledge possessed. It is quite possible that some truth may be rejected by a man as error; but that does not affect the question under discussion. The real position is, that unbelief in the abstract is a necessity of the constitution of the human mind, and the more the mind is furnished and cultivated, the more extensive will be the unbelief. Thus Scepticism arises from the very nature of things, and has its foundation in the universal mentality

of the race ; and, instead of deploring this fact, it is one that should be rejoiced at, because it is a safeguard against error ; it stimulates and enriches human thought, and ennobles the intellectual character of mankind. As Tennyson remarks :—

“There is more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.”

CHARLES WATTS.

NIGHT.

IN the mute, holy Sabbath of the night,
When angel eyes their twinkling vigils keep,
Through the profound and solemn vault of blue
Come stealing to the heart (though finest ears
Catch not the melody) entrancing chords
Of heaven-made music, that attune anew
The unstrung spirit, strained to dissonance
By the ungentle touch of jarring day.
The waves of turbulence and pride ebb out,
And leave the shores of calm reflection high
Above their restless level ; but, alas !
Their back retire lays bare the stranded wrecks
Of many righteous purposes that swamped
And foundered in their strife.

THOMAS MEAD.

THE WORSHIP OF RELICS.

FIRST PAPER.

It is often supposed that the worship of relics is peculiarly Christian ; but it belongs to all men in all ages, and is beautiful and holy in its origin, though it may degenerate into the coarsest, rankest superstition. Inspired by reverence, gratitude, and affection, it seeks to recall what has been warmly loved by the individual or enthusiastically adored by vast multitudes. The idolatry of relics at which Englishmen laugh is not more absurd or abject than the idolatry of rank to which they themselves are so prone. It may seem fatuous enough that human beings should take long pilgrimages to see, and to bow down in homage to, the reputed nails or bones of a saint who died a thousand years ago ; but when, not long since, young English ladies contended for the stones of the cherries which the Prince of Wales had eaten at a German hotel, was it not more fatuous still ? In one of Béranger's finest poems, "The Memories of the People," a venerable old peasant woman tells her grandchildren about Napoleon, about his great glory and lamentable downfall. Once, in his days of grievous disaster, Napoleon came to her house hungry, weary, and depressed. She gave him brown bread to eat and piquette to drink. With tenderness and triumph, she shows the glass out of which Napoleon drank the piquette. What a precious relic the glass thenceforward !

The ancients worshipped relics. Salamis is famous evermore for the victory of Themistocles over the Persian fleet ; but Salamis could also boast of a sacred stone on which Telamon, the father of Ajax, had sat ! Of the many ladies whom Zeus or Jupiter loved one was Leda, the wife of Tyndareus, King of Sparta. The transformation of Jupiter into a swan is a popular, but by no means a pleasant, myth. An egg, which no doubt was the egg of an ostrich, was seen suspended in one of the Spartan temples, and was viewed with awe and wonder as Leda's egg ! At Panopeas, in Phocis, were shown some of the lumps of the clay out of which Prometheus had made man ! A nobler treasure still would have been the remainder of the divine fire with which Prometheus had animated the clay. Marvellous is the power of faith : the lumps of clay were believed to have the smell of human flesh ! Very

various and very amazing were the adventures of Perseus ; by no knight-errant of the modern world have they been surpassed. He cut off the head of the hideous Medusa, and delivered from a sea-monster the charming Andromeda and married her. Perseus and Andromeda, and the father and mother of Andromeda, took their place among the constellations. A conspicuous figure at Rome in the century immediately preceding the Christian era was Marcus Aemilius Scaurus. His widowed mother, Caecilia, married Sulla, and this had some influence on his fortunes. In the third war against Mithridates he served as quæstor under Pompey, and increased the great wealth he had inherited from his father. Sent into Palestine, he, for a large sum, surrendered the government to Aristobulus. Afterwards he commanded in Syria. Then he invaded a part of Arabia, and did not retire till he had received from the king of the country three hundred talents. Elected Curule Aedile, he squandered wantonly what he had gained wickedly. In a splendid theatre which he erected, and which could contain more than eighty thousand spectators, he gave scenic games. There were three hundred and sixty marble columns and three thousand bronze statues. The walls were adorned with glass mosaic, with Sicyonian pictures, and with tapestry. In the circus were exhibited to the people a hippopotamus, five crocodiles, and a hundred and fifty panthers. Ruined by his extravagance, Scaurus pillaged, without measure or mercy, Sardinia, to the government of which he had been appointed. Accused, on his return, he was defended by Hortensius and Cicero, and was acquitted, though his guilt was clear enough. A year or two after a second accusation was made : this time, though again defended by Cicero, he was less fortunate—he was condemned to exile. His mansion on the Palatine Hill was renowned for its magnificence and for its treasures of art. Mazois, a French architect and archæologist, published in 1819 a work entitled “The Palace of Scaurus ; or, Description of a Roman House.” Scaurus brought to Rome bones of the sea-monster Perseus had slain ! Our museums contain nothing so curious as those bones would be if they could be found.

Such were some of the relics at the period immediately antecedent to Christianity. Relics have, first, a historical, then a sympathetic, then a religious interest ; at last, they array themselves in miraculous attributes. It is the miraculous power ascribed to relics which is their abiding power. We cannot suppose that Buddha’s tooth, which is the glory and pride of Ceylon, and which is as big as that of a horse, was ever in a human mouth ; but it is all the more miraculous from its extraordinary size. The idea, however, of death may predominate over the idea of the miraculous. Mummification made Egypt one vast home, one manifold heritage of relics ; and even at feasts mummies—

that is, relics—were the ghastly guests. Yet the joy of the feasts does not seem to have been lessened thereby. The Egyptian priests were men of science; they were also physicians; and it is said that, to some extent, though not wholly, they instituted mummification for hygienical reasons, and that the plague was never known in Egypt till mummification ceased. In India relics have always abounded, as everything else connected with religion has abounded; but in India, where there are two or three hundred kinds of serpents and snakes, and where there have always been tigers and tyrants, famines and pestilences, and devouring floods, life has been held cheap. In India, therefore, relics have been regarded as symbols of death rather than miraculous potencies. So also was it in the Middle Ages, when misery was as intense as it was immense, and when the more earnest and pious a man, the more he viewed death as a teacher and a friend. Towards the close of the Middle Ages a more jovial, or, at least, less gloomy, spirit began to prevail; and relics shared in the new cheerfulness. We have an example in a festival which was celebrated at Nuremberg every year, the second Friday after Easter. Its main feature was an exhibition of the *Heiltum*, comprehending the Insignia of the Empire, which, from the year 1424, had been entrusted to the City of Nuremberg. As the city connected with this exhibition a great fair, an enormous mass of people streamed through the streets. How vast the crowds were we learn from official documents, which state that in the year 1463, on the second Friday after Easter, twelve hundred and sixty waggons and six hundred carts entered by the city gates. In the market-place, which was warded by chains from the approach of vehicles, a magnificent scaffold was erected, in which were exhibited the Empire's precious treasures, called by the people *Heiltum*, or *Heiligthum*, and every one was at liberty to inspect them. The exposition was intended for something more than the mere satisfaction of curiosity; it was a solemn proof to the people that the Insignia of the Empire still existed. The *Spießbürger*, or *Spearman*, gained on the occasion large sums for meat and drink and other things. Besides the Insignia, properly so-called, such as the sword of Charlemagne, his crown, his sceptre, and so on, the *Heiltums* had as contents a piece of the Cross of Christ, the nail and the lance with which he had been pierced, a part of the holy manger of Bethlehem, portions of the chains with which the Apostles, Peter, Paul, and John, had been bound, and the like. Additional solemnity was given to the exposition by the presence of a bishop and of numerous priests, and by the ringing of the city bells. The Church of the Holy Ghost at Nuremberg, in which the *Heiltum* was formerly kept, was restored about thirty years ago. From Nuremberg the Insignia of the Empire travelled to Vienna. In the political, the ecclesiastical, the social history—in the literary, the

artistic, the commercial development of Germany, Nuremberg played, for centuries, a brilliant part ; and it is still, by reason of its architectural aspects and general associations, a most interesting city. In one respect, a signal change has come over it. Once intensely Catholic, Nuremberg is now predominantly Protestant. After an eclipse of more than half a century, there is anew a German Empire ; but the Insignia are of a more prosaic kind than those which had their home at Nuremberg. If, however, they appeal less to the imagination and the heart, they are more suggestive to a prosaic age than the *Heiltum* would now be. Should we rejoice or should we mourn thereat ?

Trier, or in French, Treves, has its name from the Treviri, a Celtic people. It is a much more ancient city than Nuremberg, its origin being traceable to the Roman period, or beyond it ; and it has many remarkable Roman remains. In recent days it has won fame, not from heroic deeds, but from a Holy Coat. There have been many Holy Coats among the relics directly relating to Christ. Of Holy Coats, made of wool or of linen, and without any seam, Angenteuil and other places have boasted ; but the most illustrious of Holy Coats is that preserved in the Cathedral of Trier. A legend, which is said not to be older than the twelfth century, makes known that the Empress Helena, the mother of Constantine, found the coat along with the cross of Christ in Palestine, and that, loving Trier well, she sent the coat and other relics to Aegrotius, who was bishop there. The Empress Helena is famous in history as Saint Helena. So vague and so various are the conjectures of historians respecting her origin, her place of birth, and her marriage, that no certainty or approach to certainty can be arrived at on any of these points. English annalists have pretended that she was the daughter of a British king, and that Constantius married her at Eboracum, now York, the residence of the Roman Governor ; and that at Eboracum Constantine was born. The Greek chroniclers, on the other hand, say that Helena's place of nativity was Dorpanum, near Nicomedia, the capital of Bithynia ; that Helena's father kept a tavern, at which Constantius stopped, either when going to or coming from Persia as Ambassador. Constantius married Helena, but went forth on his journey just before Constantine was born, whom, however, Helena did not bring into the world at Dorpanum, but at Naissus, in Dacia, about the year 274. Other historians, again, say that Dalmatia was the native country of Helena, and that, while she was travelling with Constantius, Constantine had his birth either at Trier, Edessa, or Tarsus. It has been asserted, without any evidence, and without any show of probability, that Helena was the concubine of Constantius, not his wife. It is true that he forsook Helena in 291, and married Theodora ; but this was for political reasons. What proves that, spite

of their separation, he regarded Helena as his legitimate spouse is the testamentary disposition by which he reduced to the condition of private persons the children he had by Theodora and instituted Helena's son as his sole heir. Moreover, when Constantius felt that he was dying, he, in the presence of the troops he commanded, gave Constantine solemn recognition. In 306 Constantine invited his mother to the imperial palace at Trier, and loaded her with marks of affection and esteem.

It is not known at what epoch Helena embraced Christianity. Some writers suppose that she had always been a Christian. That, as a pious, humble, charitable believer, Helena had great influence over her son is unquestionable ; but, in elevating Christianity to the religion of the State, and indeed in all his conduct, Constantine was eminently a political calculator. Listening to the false accusations of his wife, Fausta, Constantine put to death Crispus, his son by his first wife, Minervina. This, the most deplorable, most detestable, of Constantine's crimes and cruelties, profoundly grieved Helena, and her indignation at Fausta blended with sorrow for the loss of her grandson. Partly from religious motives, and partly that she might find consolation to her afflicted soul, she undertook a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. On her journey she delivered captives, rendered justice to the oppressed, clothed and fed the indigent, recompensed the services of the old legionaries, restored Christian temples, and in these worshipped along with the poorest of the poor. Followed by the benedictions of all the unfortunate whom she had succoured, she reached Mount Calvary, on which, during the reign of the Emperor Adrian, a Pagan temple had been erected. By order of St. Helena, this temple was pulled down. According to the information furnished by a Hebrew, excavations were made, the sepulchre of Jesus Christ was discovered, and the Holy Cross was found with the inscriptions such as the Evangelists have recorded. The magnificent Church of the Holy Sepulchre was, by command of St. Helena, built ; also two other churches, one on the Mount of Olives and one at Bethlehem. But these three churches were not finished and consecrated till some years after Saint Helena's death. She left Palestine in 337, and went to join the Emperor, who was travelling in Illyria. On an August day in that year she died in his arms, at the age of fourscore. Her mortal remains were taken to Rome, where a monument was raised to her memory. The Greek historians state that two years after the body was transported to Constantinople. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, built by order of Saint Helena, was destroyed by the Persians in 604, but restored by the Emperor Herodius. By the merciless hands of the Turks, it was converted into a ruin in 1011, but renewed by the Patriarch Romanus in 1048. The Mohammedans, after

the conquest of Jerusalem, having placed great hindrances in the way of pilgrimages to the Holy Sepulchre, the Crusades resulted, which brought Europe and Asia into conflict for two centuries, and potently helped to transform the whole mediæval world. The vicissitudes which Churches of the Holy Sepulchre have undergone since the time of the Crusades it is unnecessary here to record. In those Churches peace has not reigned. Close to the very tomb, or what was believed to be the very tomb, of the Crucified Christ, his disciples have jangled and wrangled more fiercely with each other than ever they did with the Mohammedans. It would not be altogether ironical to ascribe to the Mohammedans a merciful intention in making the approach to the Holy Sepulchre as difficult as possible. As the Holy Sepulchre has been the cause of wars before, it may be the cause of wars again. Affairs grow more and more entangled in the East, and there must ultimately be a fight for the possession of Syria. Politicians are never at a loss for a pretext when they want to get up a quarrel; unscrupulous ambition readily assumes a religious garb. And nothing has tended more to bring religion into contempt. Russia is the chief political hypocrite, and is gradually drawing nearer to Palestine. When the filting season comes Russia may proclaim that her soul is sore vexed by the presence near the Holy Sepulchre of Mohammedan Infidels. Thus a new crusade cannot be far off; and the stupid and credulous throughout Christendom will applaud the victorious robber who is so profusely pious.

WILLIAM MACCALL.

(To be continued.)

THE GOD IDEA.

THIRD PAPER.

HAVING glanced somewhat cursorily at the religious development of the Eastern Aryan peoples, we will now turn to the Western Aryans, and observe the manner in which the old Vedic myth was perpetuated in Western Europe, leaving the Central Aryans, or that branch which remained in and around Persia and Western Afghanistan, for subsequent consideration ; for, in this central district, the Mongol Akkadians and the Semites intermingled so frequently with the Aryans that a very intricate mythological system gradually came into operation in some districts, bearing resemblance to the Vedic, the Semitic, and the Mongolian mythologies.

The Western branch of the great Aryan family, after penetrating into Southern Europe, became the progenitors of the ancient Pelasgi, the earliest known inhabitants of Greece, and through them transmitted the original Aryan myth to their successors, the Hellenes. Homer, in his "Iliad" and "Odyssey," written at latest B.C. 900, well describes the religion of the Achæans, who inhabited Hellas for centuries prior to B.C. 1000, and long before the supremacy of the Dorians ; and, in this description, as well as in that of Hesiod's "Theogony," written immediately afterwards, there is exhibited a remarkable similarity to the old Vedic system, the very name of the supreme deity being clearly derived from an Aryan source, and that root being the identical expression used to designate the Vedic Dawn God. From Dyaus Pitar, the Day Father or Dawn God of the Aryans, the Greeks derived their Zeus Pater, from whence we get Dios, Theos, the Latin *Deus Pater*, *Dies Pater* and Jupiter, and the French *Dieu*. Zeus was supreme god, high above all others, having unlimited power, and living up in the vault of heaven, surrounded by the inferior and subordinate deities, who together formed his Olympian court. Instead of being nature powers, these gods were endowed with freedom of action, subject to pain and pleasure, and depended for their sustenance upon food. The supremacy of King Zeus was firmly established ; he presided over councils of the gods to deliberate great matters, and was not bound or fettered by any recognised restraint. With Athena and

Apollo, he formed a supreme triad, himself being the head, Athena the reason or wisdom of the Divine Father, and Apollo the mouth, revealer of his counsel, and loving son, who is always of one will with his father. With Apollo was closely associated Prometheus, the great benefactor and liberator of the race of man, who, according to that beautiful tragedy of "Æschylus," brought salvation to the world in spite of Jupiter, his father and torturer, by whom he was crucified on a rock, where he remained in fearful anguish until liberated by Hercules. Here we find the old Vedic saviour redeeming the world from the darkness and misery of night or winter, the same drama precisely as that described in connection with the Eastern Aryan mythology. In both instances the apparent daily and annual ascension and decline of the sun is depicted: in the one case it rises again after its period of defeat in winter, or night, as the sun-god Indra, afterwards Surya, and still later Krishna; while in the other case it resuscitates the earth as Prometheus, the benefactor of mankind. Just as Prometheus was but the Greek counterpart of the Hindu Krishna, so also were Apollo, Hercules, Iao, and Dionysos precisely the same. Each was the new-born sun, bringing back light and glory to suffering humanity; and each passed through the very same periods of power, decline, and misery before being born again.

Zeus was the sun-god *par excellence*, residing on the summit of Olympus, or in the highest part of the heavenly vault, during the summer months, when he was called Olympian Zeus, and down in Hades during the winter period, when he was known as the Stygian Zeus; and thus the oracle of the Klarion Apollon taught that the supreme God was called, according to the seasons of the year, Hades, Zeus, Helios, and Iao. Apollo and Prometheus, although saviour sun-gods, representing the new-born sun victorious over death and winter, were yet one with Zeus, and merely repetitions of the same character under different names. So, in like manner, Hercules was not only son of Zeus, but Zeus himself, and may be traced right through the complete annual circuit in his twelve labours, from Hades to Olympus, and from Olympus to Hades again. Dionysos was, in reality, not an Aryan deity, but of Egyptian origin, having been introduced into Greece at a very early time, either from Egypt, where he was worshipped as Mises, or, more probably, from Phœnicia, where he was worshipped under the name of Iēs, which accounts for the fact that hero personifications of Dionysos in later times were accorded the designation of Iesous, (Ἰησοῦς, or in capitals ΙΗΣΟΥΣ—Latin Jesus), the Greek form of Iēs (Ιης, or in capitals ΙΗΣ). This Egyptian saviour sun-god became later the popular god Bacchus of the Romans, just as Apollo had been the popular Greek divinity, and was thus described

by Macrobius : "The images or statues of Bacchus represent him sometimes under the form of a child, sometimes under that of a young man, at other times with a beard of a mature man, and, lastly, with the wrinkles of old age, as the Greeks represent the god whom they call Baccapée and Briseis, and as the Neapolitans in Campania paint the god whom they honour under the name of Hebon. These differences of age relate to the sun, who seems to be a tender child at the winter solstice, such as the Egyptians represent him on a certain day [December 25th], when they bring forth from an obscure nook of their sanctuary his infantine image, because, the day being then at the shortest, the god seems yet to be but a feeble infant : gradually growing from this moment, he arrives, by degrees, at the vernal equinox, under the form of a young man, of which his images at that time bear the appearance ; then he arrives at his maturity, indicated by the tufted beard with which the images which represent him at the summer solstice are adorned, the day having then taken all the increase of which it is susceptible. Lastly, he decreases insensibly, and arrives at his old age, pictured by the state of decrepitude in which he is portrayed in the images."

Yao, Iao, or Adonis was of Semitic origin, although widely worshipped in Greece, and generally identified with Zeus, whose Semitic counterpart he really was, although himself a saviour sun-god. Yao, to the Phœnicians and Chaldeans, was as Zeus and Prometheus to the Greeks, and represented the whole annual circuit, though he was always called by the Greeks specially the god of the autumn, on account of his having, at that period, to part from his lover, Aphrodite (Venus), for six months ; and thus there was usually a certain melancholy attached to his worship, the oracle of the Klarion Apollon terming him the darling or tender Yao, god of the autumn.

As the Greek power and civilisation declined and the Roman advanced, the god Yao, like his counterpart Iês, became one of the most popular of the Roman deities, being worshipped under the name Adonis in every city of Italy ; and the mythological horizon became crowded with gods and demi-gods of every description, until, at length, it became a very difficult matter to determine who was a god and who was not worthy of that distinction ; for the Roman Emperors were invariably deified, as well as others of less degree. The old Aryan drama, however, was preserved throughout in the worship of the principal gods, and has even been perpetuated in the reformed religion of the Semitic communistic enthusiast, Yahoshua, which became, soon after the commencement of our era, the popular religious system of the whole of Europe.

We have now to deal with the Central Aryans, or Eranians ; and, in doing so, must bear in mind that, while the Eastern Aryans, or Hindus,

and the Western Aryans of Europe, were almost altogether uninfluenced for many centuries by the mythologies of surrounding tribes of other and distinct families of the human race, this was far from being the case with the Eranians, who were almost entirely cut off from their Western brethren ; and, although still in comparatively close contact with the Eastern Aryans, were yet completely wedged in between the Turanian Urals on the north, and the great Semitic stream of life on the south and west. Such being the case, it is at once apparent that the religion of the Eranian people would quickly lose many of its distinctive Aryan marks and acquire many Turanian and Semitic characteristics. Bactria, in Eastern Eran (Persia), appears to have been the ancient birthplace of this semi-Aryan religion, which afterwards developed, under the influence of that great reformer, Zoroaster (Zarathustra), into the cultus called Mazdeism, or Parsism. From the Avesta, the sacred writings of the Parsis, written in the old Zend language, we derive considerable knowledge of Mazdeism. Ahura Mazdao (Omazd), the all-wise spirit, is supreme god, far above all gods, being creator of the world, god of light and truth, existing from the beginning, and eternal. Inferior to him are Mithra, god of light ; Nairyo Sanha, god of fire ; Apam Napat, god of water ; Haoma, god of the drink of immortality ; and Tistrya, the dog-star god. The chief goddess of fruitfulness was Anahita, who in later time, became an important deity in association with the worship of Mithra, the son of Ormuzd. Mazdeism also recognised a god of evil, Ahro Mainyus (Ahriman), who, with the evil Devas, inhabit the underworld, and oppose Ormuzd on every occasion ; the world lying between the two kingdoms of righteousness and evil, ruled over respectively by Ormuzd and Ahriman. This dualism is the most marked feature of Mazdeism, and runs through the whole religion, being found in every myth, and giving rise to the most hideous conceptions of morality. In the cosmogony of the Parsis the great creator, Ormuzd, after making a perfect world and introducing a perfect pair of human beings, is defeated by the wicked Ahriman, who creates evil, and seduces the man and woman to sin, thus placing in opposition to each other upon this earth the two forces, good and evil. To avoid the influence of this evil force, and to gain that of the good power, was the great aim of all true Mazda-worshippers ; and the means whereby this much-desired end could be attained was the fire-god, Nairyo Sanha, to whom constant supplications were made for this purpose. So great was the influence of Ahriman upon human beings that the god of light, Mithra, was promised as a saviour to come upon the earth and rescue his people from the power of evil, his mission being to avenge his father's defeat by the god of the under world, after doing which he would ascend to his father and become one with him for ever. The Magi, or Mithraic

priests of the "black art," or "hidden science of astrology," are thus addressed in the "Zend-Avesta":—"You, my children, shall be first honoured by that divine person who is to appear in the world; a star shall be before you to conduct you to the place of his nativity; and when you have found him, present to him your oblations and sacrifices, for he is indeed your lord and an everlasting king," meaning that after the constellation of the virgin came to the eastern line of the horizon, as it did at twelve o'clock at midnight, between December 24th and December 25th, in the period immediately following that in which the words were written, the great star, *Vindemiatrix*, in the virgin's elbow, would, on January 6th, begin to shine, pointing out to the astrologers, or Magi, her exact situation, who would then know that the birth of the god-light of the new revolution had taken place, and that by his re-appearance he would declare himself to be the everlasting ruler of the universe. Consequently, for centuries after this time the image of the god-light Mithra was presented to the people for adoration every year on December 25th, soon after midnight, in the shape of a newly-born male child, brought from the recesses of the sacred grotto, or mystic cave of Mithra. Another image, supposed to be the same deity fully grown, was said to die, and was carried to the tomb after death by the priests, who chanted solemn hymns and groaned. After pretending to mourn for three days, the sacred torch, or emblem of new life, was lighted, and the priests exclaimed, "Reassure yourselves, sacred bands of initiated; your god is restored to life; his pains and sufferings procure your salvation." This took place at the vernal equinox, and the people responded: "I salute you, new light; I salute you, young bridegroom and new light."

Like the old Aryan scheme, this Mithra myth was derived from the constellations, having reference to the decline of the year in autumn, the defeat of the sun by the powers of darkness (or winter), and the re-birth and ascension of that grand luminary in the spring of the year. Mithra was "spiritual life contending with spiritual darkness, and through his labours the kingdom of darkness will be lit with heaven's own light: the eternal will receive all things back into his favour; and the world will be redeemed to God. The impure are to be purified, and the evil made good, through the mediation of Mithras, the reconciler of Ormuzd and Ahriman. Mithras is the good; his name is Love. In relation to the Eternal he is the source of grace; in relation to men he is the life-giver and mediator. He brings the Word, as Brahma brings the Vedas, from the mouth of the Eternal" (Plutarch, "De Iside et Osiride"). The close connection of the later Eranians with the Chaldeans no doubt gave the former facilities for studying the Akkadian astronomy; and, therefore, it is fair to presume that the phenomenon of the precision of

the equinoxes was well understood by them, which would account for the fact that Mithra is always represented in earlier times under the figure of a bull, and afterwards under that of a lamb. The reason of this is that, prior to about B.C. 2,200, the vernal equinoxial sign was the zodiacal figure of the bull (*Taurus*); while, after that period, the figure of the lamb or ram (*Aries*) took its place; and as the saviour sun-god Mithra was the personification of the new annual sun, born in the December constellation, crossing the equator in March, and thereby conquering the powers of evil or darkness, he was invariably represented by the figure of the zodiacal constellation, which happened to be at the vernal equinoxial point at the time.*

Having thus briefly glanced at the religious cults of the three branches of the great Aryan family, and found the very same religious conception of a divine and incarnate saviour God, redeeming the world from the powers of darkness and evil, running through each mythological system, we cannot help coming to the conclusion that, inasmuch as the saviour-myth was developed into its full proportions long after the separation of the families took place, and inasmuch as the development followed similar lines in each separate case, there must have been some common guide, and that guide was the unwritten word of nature as expressed in the heavens above.

HERBERT JUNIUS HARDWICKE, M.D., F.R.C.S.

(*To be continued.*)

* *Vide* my "Popular Faith Unveiled."

CHARLES DARWIN.

As the month of June will be memorable in history through the unveiling of the statue of Darwin in the Natural History Museum by Professor Huxley, it may be of interest to revert to Darwin's own account of what led him to think out the mode of origination of living things. He explained this in his "Origin of Species;" but in his letter to Haeckel, translated from the German by Darwin himself, and published in 1876, he gives further details, and makes an interesting reference to the famous Malthus:—

"Having reflected much on the foregoing facts, it seemed to me probable that allied species were descended from a common ancestor. But during several years I could not conceive how each form could have been modified so as to become admirably adapted to its place in nature. I began, therefore, to study domesticated animals and cultivated plants; and, after a time, perceived that man's power of selecting and breeding from certain individuals was the most powerful of all means in the production of new races. Having attended to the habits of animals and their relations to the surrounding conditions, I was able to realise the struggle for existence to which all organisms are subjected; and my geological observations had allowed me to appreciate, to a certain extent, the duration of past geological periods. With my mind thus prepared, I fortunately happened to read Malthus's 'Essay on Population;' and the idea of natural selection, through the struggle for existence, at once occurred to me. Of all the subordinate points in the theory, the last which I understood was the cause of the tendency in the descendants from a common progenitor to diverge in character."

With reference to Darwin's critics and detractors referred to by Professor Huxley, there is a good sample in an anonymous volume published in 1878, entitled "Darwinism Examined." By this date it will be seen that the race is by no means so ancient as is generally supposed. I have been taken to task for attempting to show that Darwinism is Atheistic—that is, *without God*. But, in doing this, no offensiveness was intended, nor any attempt to claim Darwin as an Atheist or as an advocate of Atheism. I hold that all science and all generalisations, founded on observed facts and an invariable method of nature, are Atheistic in the sense defined. If God ever interfered,

nothing would be certain ; science would be impossible ; calculation and prediction would be useless.

The writers in the monthly *Journal of Science* who think me in the wrong would do me a service by attempting to show that I am. The following is quoted as a curiosity of recent literature, written by a man who professes an acquaintance with comparative anatomy, chemistry, surgery, and a great knowledge of mankind derived from extensive travels. Moreover, it was written during an interval of leisure on a visit to France. Those who wrote in the same fashion a quarter of a century ago had many excuses—ignorance, prejudice, and novelty ; but this man writes after thirty years of criticism :—

“ Therefore, I conclude that this theory is less to be relied on than any of the effete and tolerably extinct hypotheses previously referred to [viz., Phrenology, Mesmerism, Materialism, and Spiritualism] ; and, as its operation (whether so designed or not) is more Atheistical, and so far more pernicious to humanity, its refutation is the more to be desired. Example third of the effects of such teaching : A man was lately reported in America as giving a lecture, at the close of which he had advertised his intention to destroy himself. The audience was considerable, under these novel circumstances. Having concluded a most interesting discourse, he, in compliance with his advertised intention, before any one could interfere, drew a pistol out of his pocket and blew his brains out. At his lodgings was found a will leaving all his property to purchase the works of Darwin, Tyndall, and Huxley, for the public library of the district. Such being some of the Darwinian theory’s proved results, its suppression on the ground of being contrary to Nature and her true interpretation is clearly an object much to be desired.”

“ His [Darwin’s] wisdom is, to think that what he sees owes its origin to itself, or to something equally incapable ; he pretends, in fact, to know what went before the beginning. Such is the aim of his researches, if duly estimated ; there is no true reverence in them, none to be deduced from them—they are essentially Atheistic.”

“ Are they [Darwin’s facts and inferences] reasonable, scientific, ennobling, sagacious in conception, to be relied on as true leading lights ; or are they utterly weak and misleading, unintelligible in a reasonable or scientific, and contemptible in an inferential, sense ? ‘Atheistic ? No ; this latter they cannot be ; for Tyndall, Darwin, and Co. all profess belief in a God. Then I can only think them worse than Atheists ; for an Atheist’s unbelief knows no profession of respect for the object of his incredulity ; whereas these men would reduce the Great Being they say they believe in to a level with themselves—that is, with their intellectual capabilities. And in this spirit they approach creation at large :

in this spirit Darwin approaches the special creation of mankind ; in this spirit they reject what is God's absolute right, Mystery ; and when in His right and in His might and in His wisdom, which is His Omniscience, He becomes dark to them through excess of light, then they absolutely deny Him, asserting all the time their belief in a God ; and so asserting, they commence to criticise His work with human senses, earthly intelligences, ignorant assumptions, and vaguest probabilities, begot of unreason. This is to deny Him, and worse and lower it is than honest, straightforward denial."*

CHARLES C. CATTELL.

* "Darwinism Examined." Anon. (Bickers & Son ; 1878.)

NOTES AND SCRAPS.

OUR readers will observe from our advertisement pages that the opening chapters of Ignotus's "Exposition of the Spencerian Philosophy" are now published. It would ill become us to extol the work of our contributor, or to give prominence to the highly eulogistic encomiums which have reached us concerning his treatment of his great master's life-work; but it may be permitted us to here publicly record, in no formal manner, our indebtedness to Albert Simmons for his loyal and disinterested co-operation in the establishment of this magazine, which, from its very inception, has had his most cordial goodwill and most generous help. It may never be in our power to fittingly or fairly recognise his literary labours on this magazine; but we shall always remember with more than pride that, in our efforts to popularise (in so far as it can be popularised) Philosophical Agnosticism, Albert Simmons was our steadfast and devoted colleague, always willing, always cheerful, never disheartened. His work has been a pure labour of love, and those who value his contributions can best show their appreciation by aiding in the distribution of the "Exposition." With a view to obtaining a wide circulation for this Agnostic text-book, each chapter is issued separately in a cheap form, and, as will be seen from the advertisement, our Publishers will be pleased to forward one hundred copies (assorted or otherwise) post free on receipt of 5s. 6d.

During the forthcoming month the Agnostic leaflets advertised in a recent issue of this magazine will be in circulation. They will be obtainable of our Publishers at the rate of sixpence a hundred, separately or assorted.

We regret to have to announce that "G. M. McC.," whose skilled and felicitous judgment has, in no inconsiderable degree, guided the destinies of this magazine, is indisposed. Our readers will, we are confident, join with us in wishing our contributor and coadjutor a speedy restoration to health.

Mr. Charles Watts has returned to England on a visit, and during his brief sojourn in the old country he has been induced to accept a few lecturing engagements. It is not his intention, however, to address many meetings, and already he has been compelled to decline several invitations to speak on behalf of various Societies. We were glad to hear from Mr. Watts personally that his third tour in the United States and Canada has been a most complete success, the reception he met

with in all the leading centres being remarkably enthusiastic ; while numerically the audiences far surpassed the attendances at previous Freethought gatherings. Mr. Watts returns to America early in September, to conduct, in conjunction with Colonel Ingersoll, the great Freethought movement among our Transatlantic brethren.

After mature deliberation, Colonel Ingersoll has decided to postpone his intended visit to this country. We believe we are correct in saying that, provided his business engagements permit, the gallant Colonel will cross the Atlantic some time next year.

A sincere and right faith deserveth and requireth body and soul ; a bland and foolish one is content with that which is given it by its votary, and often gets little of either as its desert. As if religion were not of the essence of living, not a pastime, as in these latter years.

It has often been proved beyond doubt that the hardest worker in the field of manual labour talks least of his work, and that those who continually insist upon such subjects as the anvil of toil, the ring of the hammer-stroke, and the resultant perspiration, are not seldom the laziest scamps that ever were paid for doing nothing. There is no man so well acquainted with the circumstances and accidents of toil—everything but the toil itself—than the idler who never did a stroke of honest work in his life.

The clown is not without excuse if, strong in the belief of his forefathers, he clings to superstitions, and refuses to listen to the scientific explanation of natural phenomena. His stripes, if any, should be few. But that the accomplished, the profound scientist, rich with his lifetime of research, should for an instant refuse (as he has done) to glance one hair's breadth beyond the groove of his accustomed investigations, on the ground that such and such inquiries are illegitimate, is unpardonable. Yet the keenest reproach, the severest punishment, that can be meted out to him is disregard and the process of the suns.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURES.—Mr. Watts will lecture as follows :—July 12th, Plymouth ; July 19th, Sheffield ; July 26th, Birmingham ; August 2nd, Northampton ; August 9th, Rochdale ; August 16th, Milton Hall, London ; August 23rd, Edinburgh ; August 30th, Glasgow ; September 6th, Hall of Science, London. Mr. Watts regrets that he is unable to accept any more lecturing engagements previous to his return to America early in September next.

All communications to be addressed—EDITOR of AGNOSTIC, 17, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

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"I think that generally (and more and more as I grow older), but not always, an Agnostic would be the more correct description of my state of mind."—CHARLES DARWIN.

VOL. I.]

AUGUST, 1885.

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THE AGNOSTIC.

AUGUST, 1885.

THE ETHICS OF AGNOSTICISM.

It is one of the stock objections urged by Christians against the Agnostic philosophy that it provides no guarantee of righteousness—that its articles contain no sufficing enforcement of good conduct, no adequate deterrent against vice and crime. We present you—so runs the argument of these critics—with an omniscient guardian, who watches every the least act of men, and with an omnipotent vindicator, who will render to each man according to his deeds. We place before you a heaven of ineffable honour for the righteous, and a hell of unimaginable torture for the workers of ill. Morality, next to orthodoxy, is our great concern, and we have enlisted all the terrors and blandishments of the Infinite on its side. But you—what against this is your Unknowable, which, for aught you can tell us, is as insensible to all ethical distinctions as molecular motion or gravitative force? And this plot of yours for dethroning our percipient and passionate God—what is it but an effort of cosmic anarchism, as far surpassing the atrocities of Bakounin as the limits of Europe are transcended by the depths of space?

Now, in arguments like the foregoing it is obviously implied that the best, if not the only, guarantee of morality is the threat of extraneous punishment and the promise of extraneous reward. It is implied that, without such threats and promises, men will not be held from evil, and that by them they will be constrained to do well. Just as in politics there is a widely-current opinion that without government there can be no observance of justice, and that it is to government that social equilibrium is due, so in religion it is the high universal belief that without an other-world despotism there can be no abiding by the laws of perfect life, and that faith in future retribution brings about the keeping of these. It is certain, however, that penal systems

life. It is to say that, while men degrade the Unknowable to the likeness of an Old Bailey Magistrate; while they veil the natural consequences of right actions under the semblance of a gigantic *Oeil-de-Bœuf*, and darken the inevitable results of ill deeds with the travesty of a supernatural Norfolk Island—while these monstrous misconceptions prevail, there can be no high morality. It is to declare that this pretended security of righteousness—this faith in future retribution so much extolled—is so far from being an assurance of goodness that it is the certain guarantee of sin.

For ourselves, it is unfortunate that men so obstinately think of our philosophy as a pure negation; that they suffer our denial of absolute knowledge to blind them to a recognition of that knowledge which we do profess. For our confession of ignorance makes but half our creed. We own an absolute mystery; but, in the same breath, we proclaim a relative knowledge—a knowledge which, for all human purposes, is infinite, and which, as it is all that man can attain to, is likewise all whereof man has need.

Within the limits of the phenomenal—in the ever-widening consciousness of relations—we shall find all that for our ethical guidance is required; and to extend that consciousness, to give breadth and precision to men's ideas of causation, is, or should be, every Agnostic's aim. We do not say that knowledge will give you virtue; but we say that, with increase of knowledge, a higher virtue will inevitably come. Timid souls hope falteringly that truth may make for goodness; but the Agnostic knows that it must. He has assurance that there is no civil strife in nature, that what is right in one aspect cannot be wrong in another, and that the same power which prompts him to utter a truth will infallibly bring it to its full fruition of righteousness. And, indeed, it is idle to ask of any system of philosophy that it shall guarantee the moral advancement of man. That, happily, is not a task left to any system or any creed; its accomplishment depends not on man's volition, but is assured by the Unknowable itself. Life and morality are indissoluble; they are born together, they wax and wane in unison, they cannot die but at the same moment of time. Let none, therefore, despair of righteousness, for the whole universe is enlisted on its side. The stars in their courses fight for it, the lowest instincts work silently for its triumph; there is not a heart-beat of man but sends it onward. We know these things, and, knowing them, we are not afraid. We have confidence in the issues of existence; we have faith in the system of things. "Trust in the Unknowable!" sneer the Christian and the Positivist. Yes, it is in the Unknowable that we put our trust.

ROBERT AITKEN.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF EPICURUS AND MODERN AGNOSTICISM.*

POPULAR judgment has applied to the word *Epicurean* the idea of something soft, luxurious, and effeminate. "Epicure" and "Epicurean" come from the name of Epicurus, and have brought that name into disrepute in Europe. But the meaning attached to these words, and their origin, ought not to prejudice our judgment against the philosopher or his system.

"Villain" at one time meant no more than peasant, "knave" than lad. A "boor" was simply a farmer, and a "churl" a strong country fellow. In the same way city wits delighted to exalt the town at the expense of the country; "polite," "civil," and "urbane" were the characteristics of the town.

The Hedonists were the philosophers of pleasure before Epicurus; the name came from ἡδονή, pleasure, and they thought and taught that pleasure and its enjoyment were the supreme aims of life. Epicurus improved upon their teaching by inculcating that not all pleasures were to be aimed at, but only those which leave no injurious consequences, and that psychic pleasure was superior to physical. Duration diminishes the pleasures of the body and augments the pain, he argued, whereas the pleasures of the mind are intensified by time and the sorrows weakened.

Epicurus was born B.C. 342, at Samos. His parents were Athenians of the Gorgettian tribe; but his father had gone to Samos in civil employ, and at Samos Epicurus spent the first eighteen years of his life. He then visited Athens and studied in its schools; but, the Lamian war having broken out, he retired to Colophon, where his father appears to have supported himself by teaching. At Colophon Epicurus followed his father's example. As a philosopher, the works of Democritus appear to have been his chief study at this time, and he never afterwards lost his admiration for the atomic theory of his master. In fact, all his teaching of physical science was based on that theory.

For the rhetoricians and grammarians of his time Epicurus expressed

* A paper read before the Royal Society of Literature on June 24th, 1885; Sir Patrick de Colquhoun, Q.C., in the Chair.

his withering contempt, and they did not fail to pay him back with interest. He insisted upon it that they wasted their time in arguing about subtleties and quibbles of metaphysical lore quite useless in the conduct of life.

Having taught for some years at Colophon, Mytilene, and Lampsacus, Epicurus repaired at last to Athens, the headquarters of the literary activity of Greece. He was then in his thirty-fifth year. He purchased a garden for eighty mince, equal to about three hundred pounds of our money, and established himself as a philosophical teacher and the founder of a new school.

Xenocrates was at this time teaching in the Academy as the successor of Plato, and after him Polemon. Theophrastus taught in the school founded by Aristotle, and Zeno, founder of the Stoics, was holding forth at the Porch, whence his disciples took their names as Stoics.

Summum Bonum Voluptas was the motto of the school of Epicurus. In his discourses he was simple and ingenuous, despising the arts of the sophists. He had the merit of saying exactly what he thought, and hence it is perhaps that Athenæus calls him the most truthful of all the philosophers. Having discarded faith altogether, Epicurus would not pretend to believe the fine theories of others, however captivating they might be, unless they satisfied his reason.

Plato had taught the existence of an All-powerful and All-good Supreme Being. Epicurus could not reconcile this idea with the evil and misery he saw around him in the world—aye, and “the injustice” too : he therefore discarded it.

Aristotle had attempted to reduce all to a system, in which the Deity took his place, bound and limited by Aristotelian laws and Aristotelian logic. Who imposed these limitations on your Supreme Being? indignantly demanded Epicurus. He would have none of it. He could not see that there was any power above and beyond the Supreme to compel and enforce these Aristotelian limitations.

As to Zeno's philosophy, and the teaching of the Porch, Epicurus insisted that it was contrary to common sense, and to the universal judgment of mankind. Pain no evil! Why, then, does man instinctively flee from it? Pleasure no good! Why, then, does man instinctively pursue it? Besides this, pleasure promotes vitality, and pain lowers it. It is all very well for philosophers to preach asceticism and the mortification of the flesh, and to regard the pursuit of unhappiness as one of the great ends of life. All this, Epicurus argued, was false philosophy and untrue teaching.

Wide as the poles asunder have been the verdicts passed upon Epicurus and his philosophy by his enemies and his admirers. No

censure was too severe, according to the former ; no praise too exalted or extravagant, according to the latter.

Timocrates was one of the disciples of Epicurus, who forsook his garden, and joined the Stoics. Diogenes Laertius tells us that Timocrates represented the Epicureans as swine and goats, thinking of nothing but animal pleasures ("Diog. Laer.," 10, seg. 3). Plutarch, too, wrote a book against the Epicureans, in which similarly hard things are said of the founder of the sect and of his disciples. Timon, in the third book of his "Silli," tells us that the Epicureans thought only of indulging their animal nature, and that they made the pleasure of the stomach the fountain and root of all true pleasure ("Athenæus," vii. 14). Epictetus and Aristippus have been equally severe in their judgments.

Plato, the comic dramatist, on the other hand, asserts that Epicurus was all-wise. *He* knew what was really good and what its nature was. Damoxenus, in his "Syntrophî," declares that Epicurus was the wisest of all the Greeks, and did more good by his teaching and his philosophy than all the other philosophers of Athens put together.

But it is Diocles who speaks most enthusiastically of Epicurus, and gives us all that can be said in his favour, making him out to be the greatest of all philosophers, the most noble, the most true, the most honourable of men. Diogenes Laertius tells us that Epicurus wrote three hundred volumes. If so, is it any wonder that there was a great deal to be said against him? "O that mine enemy would write a book!" What if he wrote three hundred books!

Whatever the faults of Epicurus, all contemporary records assure us that he lived a life simple, honest, temperate, and cheerful, not pretending to asceticism on the one hand, nor complaining constantly of his lot, as is the manner of some of our nineteenth-century philosophers, on the other. His disciples generally were devotedly attached to him. He enjoyed the blessings of life in moderation, not in excess. He did not pretend to deprive himself of what was pleasant, in order that he might attain to the odour of sanctity. His life was free from pretence, from grumbling, from humbug, and hypocrisy ("Gassendi de vit. Epicu.," ii. 6).

Towards the end of his life he suffered from a painful internal disease—stone in the bladder—and ultimately died of it, in his seventy-second year. He appointed his disciple, Hermarchus of Mytilene, his successor in the School. Hermarchus was absent at the time of his death, and to him Epicurus wrote, on the very day that he died, a letter, which has fortunately been preserved. "I write to you, Hermarchus, on this, probably the last day of my life, for I suffer intolerable pain, and I am assured life cannot long endure. But I oppose to these sufferings of the body joy of spirit in thinking of the important truths I have taught

and the lessons of life which I have established. I recommend to you the children of Metrodorus. Do not desert them. This care will be worthy of the attachment you have had from your youth upwards to me and to my philosophy." The will of Epicurus was equally full of benevolence and kindly feeling ; but it is too long for insertion here.

Cicero, considering this letter and his will as the last words of Epicurus, looks upon them as marking a death no less memorable than those of the greatest heroes of Greece—" *Non ego jam Epaminonda, non Leonida mortem, hujus morti antepono.*"

Four of the epistles of Epicurus have been preserved for us by Diogenes Laertius, and give us a clear idea of his philosophical teaching. Some important fragments of his works have been found also at Herculaneum, and have been published, with translations, by Corsini, of Naples, particularly *περ φύσεως*, and his *ἀξιώματα*, or "Maxims.

From these it is manifest Epicurus taught that we received all our knowledge from *εἰδωλα*, images of things, reflected from them, and then perceived by our senses. Hence there could be no such thing as real knowledge or absolute truth. All was relative. What appeared to be truth in one age was found to be misconception in another. Pleasure was the highest good ; without it was possible no happiness, our being's end and aim ; and this happiness was the sole object of human desire, the aim of all our exertions. But no pleasure was possible without peace of mind, and no peace of mind possible without *θρόνησις*, wisdom, intelligence.

Performance of duty was a necessary element in this peace of mind. Men might seek pleasure in vice, in dissipation, in riot ; but there was always something contrary to peace of mind lurking at the bottom, unless there was the sense of duty performed.

Pain he considered a distinct evil, in opposition to the Stoics and Cynics. This pain was to be prevented or avoided as much as possible. Sometimes, of course, it was necessary to endure pain in order to secure pleasure, peace of mind, happiness hereafter. Under such circumstances, the brave man would cheerfully endure pain. When a man proclaims pleasure the chief blessing of life, it is easy, of course, to misrepresent him as subordinating all to animal enjoyment. The life of Epicurus was by no means a gross and sensual one. He lived as the other philosophers of Greece lived, pretty much as the Jewish patriarchs of old lived. But it is a calumny to assert that there was anything peculiarly low, vicious, or sensual about the life of Epicurus.

Gassendi has taken some pains to discover the truth on this subject, and to him I must refer my readers who are anxious to learn the truth about it. Unfortunately, every one who writes about Epicurus seems to consider it necessary to exaggerate, to paint him in the darkest

colours, or to describe him as possessed of every virtue. Gassendi has shown that Epicurus lived as other philosophers lived in Athens about that time, neither better nor worse. He was not a saint, nor was he a demon.

As to the body, who can deny, asks Epicurus, that a sound, healthy body is indispensable to the enjoyment of life? Does it follow that those who counsel us how to attain this sound, healthy condition of body are necessarily teaching a low and debasing morality? Certainly not. And so with the mind: a right-judging mind, unbiassed by prejudice, unperverted by false fears and false teaching, will lead to happiness. Wisdom alone can give us a sound, healthy mind, and this wisdom is only to be obtained by getting rid of false teaching and absurd terrors. Wisdom, if we can attain to it, by rooting out the errors caused by early erroneous teaching, will give us that peace of mind without which no pleasure can be enjoyed, and even in a feeble, unsound body will go far towards subduing or eradicating pain. Thus only can we hope to rule circumstances, and to prevent outward circumstances from ruling us: "*Mihi res, non me rebus, subjungere conor*," said Horace, the wisest of Epicurean poets.

Self-interest, argued Epicurus, is the rule of human conduct, the moving principle of life. We often sacrifice a present good to a future, but still pleasure is the aim; for he makes pleasure synonymous with happiness. We think the future pleasure preferable; then prudence counsels us to yield up the present gratification. Virtue gives us true pleasure; then let us cultivate virtue; but let us banish from us the affectation that we cultivate virtue for its own sake, and not for the gratification to be got from it ultimately. We cultivate it as a means to an end, and that end agreeable sensations, self-content, pleasure. If we cultivate it for the sake of ostentation, to show to others how much better we are than they, then it becomes a vice ("Diog. Laer.," 10, seg. 138).

In his eleventh Maxim Epicurus says: "We have doubts as to the gods and their nature, as to death and its consequences. Of these things we cannot obtain any certain knowledge. We must ask Philosophy to guide us." "*Primus in orbe, Deus fecit timor.*" So says the Latin poet, and so Epicurus seems to have thought and taught.

The physical philosophy of Epicurus was based upon the atomic theory of Democritus and Diagoras. Now, this atomic theory had substituted for a world-governing deity the relation of cause and effect as the sources of all things. Democritus explained the wide-spread belief in gods as the result of fear of unusual and unaccountable phenomena in nature; and, starting from this principle, Diagoras came forward with the startling dogma that there were no gods at all. This

was at a time when the old religious belief was shaken in the minds of the more intelligent of the Greeks. He attacked the commonly-received ideas of Greek theology and mythology, as well as the established forms of worship.

Epicurus based his natural philosophy on the atomic theory of Democritus and Diagoras. He maintained that we are simply material beings, that our senses are cognizant only of material objects, and our knowledge, therefore, is of material things only.

As to the gods, he did not deny their existence, like Diagoras, but simply their interference with human affairs. Lucretius gives us a distinct account of his teaching, in this respect, in his *de rerum natura*. The gods are conglomerations of atoms, just as men are. They enjoy themselves in their own sphere. Pleasure with them, as with us, is the highest good. But they do not interfere in the government of the world, else why injustice, rapine, want, sickness, and evil?

We torment ourselves without reason, he argued, with foolish fears. The history of humanity is one long record of battling with superstitious terrors and imaginary evils. The fear which induces this superstition comes from ignorance—particularly from ignorance of natural laws. We are terrified with natural phenomena only when we do not understand them, and then we think we see the hand of God. Philosophy puts us above this fear, proving to us that there is no such interference, and that we have nothing to fear from the gods. Such appears to be the teaching of Epicurus, and he illustrates it with examples drawn from the terrors of children. Anything new and unaccustomed, which they do not understand, terrifies them. Yet these terrors all are shadows, the result simply of ignorance. We laugh at them, just as the wise man laughs at the terrors of the vulgar.

WILLIAM KNIGHTON, LL.D.

(To be continued.)

HERBERT SPENCER'S PHILOSOPHY: AN EXPOSITION.

VIII.

"FIRST PRINCIPLES."

THE UNIFORMITY OF LAW.

ALONG with the persistence of Force, Agnosticism postulates the uniformity of Law. That the august procession of cause and effect is invariable; that the chain of events is never broken; that like antecedents are ever followed by like consequents; that in Nature nothing is irregular and nothing accidental: these are direct corollaries for the persistence of Force. A suspension of natural law is, therefore, an absurdity; and an occurrence which happens by chance—that is, an effect without a cause—is an impossibility.

It seems necessary to state precisely what is meant by the term Law as applied to Nature. Habitual thinking along given lines renders the majority of men completely incapable of following a train of thought running along lines other than those with which custom has made us perfectly familiar. Take a person of average intelligence, and closely catechise him as to the import of the phrase, *Law of Nature*. After a severe cross-examination, it turns out that the man has either no legitimate conception whatever or a conception answering to no fact. Thinking of the laws of England as documents executed by the collective wisdom of kings, lords, and commons, and as being preserved in the archives of parliament, he is bound to think of the laws of Nature as analogous—not, perhaps, as written enactments, like the Decalogue, lithographed on tablets of stone by the finger of an anthropomorphic deity, and preserved in the archives of heaven, but as something equally concrete, depending upon volition and being subject to alteration. From this conception springs another conception, rather less concrete, but not less erroneous. It is urged that a law of Nature necessarily pre-supposes a law-giver, and that thus we rise through Nature to a personality controlling Nature. We have actually heard

two eminent theologians gravely discussing the question as to whether Law precedes Nature or Nature precedes Law.

The answer to these and to kindred questions is obvious. Law neither precedes nor succeeds Nature, but is concomitant with it. Nature is no more the cause of Law than Law is the cause of Nature. Law means order among phenomena, the constancy of relations among co-existences and sequences. When, by observation or by experiment, we find that a certain cause is inevitably followed by a certain effect—when we find that particular events always occur in the same order—we call this order a law of Nature. We know that water always runs down hill; that fire always burns; that night always follows day, and winter summer; and from such facts we generalise natural laws. Mark, these laws are not consequents of which Nature is the antecedent, any more than Nature is the consequent of which they are the antecedents; but they are statements of the existence of an invariable connection among certain things.

The uniformity of Law may be illustrated by no fewer than three distinct methods. We may draw instances (1) from the persistence of relations among forces; (2) from the transformation and equivalence of forces; and (3) from the rhythm of motion. Let us take these illustrations in order.

The first corollary from the persistence of Force is the persistence of relations among forces. If Force can be neither produced nor destroyed—if the totality of Force is always the same—then the relations which forces bear to one another are always the same. Every manifestation of the Unknowable which we call a cause must have an unchangeable connection with that manifestation of the Unknowable known as its effect. The same antecedent must be followed invariably by the same consequent.

Suppose, for an instant, that we are at the Wimbledon meeting of riflemen. We watch the firing of two expert marksmen. "Given charges of powder alike in quantity and quality, fired from barrels of the same structure, and propelling bullets of equal weights, sizes, and forms, similarly rammed down, and it is a necessary inference that the concomitant actions which make up the explosions will bear to one another like relations of quantity and quality in the two cases. The proportions among the different products of combustion will be equal. The several amounts of force taken up in giving momentum to the bullet, heat to the gases, and sound on their escape, will preserve the same ratios. The quantities of light and smoke in the one case will be what they are in the other, and the two recoils will be alike; for no difference of proportion or no difference of relation among these con-

current phenomena can be imagined as arising without imagining such difference of proportion or relation as arising uncaused—as arising by the creation or annihilation of Force.” As we cannot mentally represent the disappearance of Force, so we cannot mentally represent the disappearance of relations among forces.

What holds true in this instance holds true in any number of instances. Under precisely the same conditions as those named above, let each of the two riflemen fire ten shots, or any multiple of ten, and the result will be precisely the same in all cases, and the relations between any two cases will be precisely similar. And what holds true of causes and effects of a simple order, holds true of causes and effects of all orders, no matter how complex—holds true, in fact, throughout all phenomena.

The second corollary from the persistence of Force is the transformation and equivalence of forces. All those modes of Force which we call Heat, Light, Magnetism, etc., are transformable into equivalent quantities of one another. A given amount of heat may be transformed into a fixed amount of magnetism, and a given amount of magnetism into a fixed amount of light; and these processes may be reversed and repeated a thousand times, without the slightest fluctuation in the sum-total of the forces employed.

The transformation and equivalence of forces may be seen always and everywhere. When we pursue a certain quantity of force through a number of changes, we see that, whatever form it takes, its various shapes are ever equivalent to its original shape. Whether we watch it in its physical form, determining the flow of an ocean-current, or in its mental form, determining the flow of a thought-current; whether we follow it as a social agent, playing at see-saw with political parties, or as a moral agent, carving out the course of a benevolent action; every one of its transformations is precisely equivalent to every other. Let us take examples of these transformations and equivalences.

Take first a physical force. “If we ask, Whence comes the power of the river-current, bearing sediment down to the sea? the reply is, The gravitation of water throughout the tract which this river drains. If we ask, How came the water to be deposited over this tract? the reply is, It fell in the shape of rain. If we ask, How came the rain to be in that position whence it fell? the reply is, The vapour from which it was condensed was drifted there by the winds. If we ask, How came this vapour to be at that elevation? the reply is, It was raised by evaporation. And if we ask, What force raised it? the reply is, The sun’s heat. Just that amount of gravitative force which the sun’s heat overcame in raising the atoms of water is given out again in

the fall of those atoms to the same level." Passing by, as too obvious to need illustration, the equivalence of vital forces, we take, secondly, examples of the equivalence of those forces known as mental. "Unusual excitement of the nerves of touch, as by tickling, is followed by almost uncontrollable movements of the limbs. Violent pains cause violent struggles. The start that succeeds a loud sound, the wry face produced by the taste of anything extremely disagreeable, the jerk with which the hand or foot is snatched out of water that is very hot, are instances of the transformation of feeling into motion; and in these cases, as in all others, it is manifest that the quantity of bodily action is proportionate to the quantity of sensation." Nor is this correlation of forces less clear in the case of emotions than in that of sensations. The force exhibited in the workings of the muscles of the face, limbs, and body is exactly equivalent to the force exhibited by the strength of the emotions. Witness "the frowns, dilated nostrils, and stampings of anger, the contracted brows and wrung hands of grief, the smiles and leaps of joy, and the frantic struggles of terror or despair." If, thirdly, we look at the social forces, we discover that they, as well as the physical forces and the mental forces, show beautiful correlations. The amounts of the social forces brought into play by any community are rigidly determined by the amounts of the physical forces supplied to that community by the external world. "In the effects of good and bad harvests we yearly see this relation illustrated. A greatly deficient yield of wheat is soon followed by a diminution of business. Factories are worked half-time, or close entirely; railway traffic falls; retailers find their sales much lessened; house-building is almost suspended; and, if the scarcity rises to famine, a thinning of the population still more diminishes the industrial vivacity. Conversely, an unusually abundant harvest, occurring under conditions not otherwise unfavourable, both excites the old producing and distributing agencies and sets up new ones. The surplus social energy finds vent in speculative enterprises. Capital seeking investment carries out inventions that have been lying unutilised. Labour is expended in opening new channels of communication.....There are more marriages, and a greater rate of increase in population. Thus the social organism grows larger, more complex, and more active." Hence we know that the physical forces, through the intermediation of the vital forces, are transformable into social forces, and that all these changes preserve an invariable equivalence.

If it is asked, What is the source of the social forces? the answer is, The sun's heat. Social forces are resolvable into mental forces, mental forces into vital forces, vital forces into physical forces, and physical forces into solar radiation. The life of a society is directly

dependent upon the mental activity of its members, the mental activity of its members upon their vital force, and their vital force upon their physical force. Without food their physical force could not last a day, without animals and vegetables food could not last an hour, and without the sun's light and heat neither an animal nor a vegetable could exist for a single moment. So that the power of the sun is literally responsible, not only for the growth of a plant and the temperature of a climate ; not only for the fluctuations in the price of flour and the ravages of a famine ; but also for the rise of a new literature and the fall of an old dynasty. To the force of the sun we trace alike the force displayed by a running fox or by a rippling rivulet, the force which vibrates in a musical note or in a yawning earthquake, and the force which moans in the wind or which crashes in the cataract.

There is yet the third corollary, of which we must take note. From the persistence of Force inevitably follows the rhythm of Motion. Rhythm is a necessary characteristic of all Motion. Rhythm is manifested throughout all phenomena—throughout the realms of the in-organic, the organic, and the super-organic.

No one can watch a boiling kettle without observing that the motion of the water is charmingly rhythmical, inasmuch as the ripples on its surface appear, die away, and re-appear at regular intervals. The same beautiful rhythm is seen on a smaller scale in the gentle ripples of a rill, and on a larger scale in the violent sinkings and swellings of a boiling ocean. The same rhythm is seen, too, in the conduct of a man whose blood boils with indignation. The tones of his voice, alternating between shouts and whispers ; the pulsations of his heart, now quick and now slow ; and the vibrations of his frame, all illustrate the one principle. There are social rhythms and mental rhythms ; vital, physical, and moral rhythms. There is rhythm in the backward and forward motion of a swaying corn-field, as well as in the alternate decays and revivals of fashions ; in the risings and fallings of the price of bread, as well as in the recurrence of winter and summer. There is rhythm in the ups and downs in the yearly-total of births, deaths, and marriages ; rhythm in the fluctuations of the records of crime, of disease, and of pauperism ; and rhythm in the oscillations of the thought-pendulum. Nor are the emotions less rhythmical. We have our fits of laughter, separated by mere smiles ; and our fits of grief, separated by the thinnest clouds of sorrow. We have our paroxysms of pain, intervening between undulations which are hardly felt ; and our paroxysms of rage, varied by waves which are scarcely perceptible. Briefly, Motion, in all its forms, from the composition of a poem to the shooting of a star, displays rhythm.

We declare, then, that the rhythm of Motion no less than the transformation and equivalence of forces, and the transformation and equivalence of forces no less than the persistence of relations among forces, proves the universality of Law. Throughout all the phenomena of Nature there exists an unqualified reign of Law. Take the weakest wavelet that ever rippled in the rudest rill, the tiniest blossom that ever blushed unseen, the faintest fly that ever floated in a sun-beam, the puniest pulse that ever panted, and the simplest thought that ever throbbed. Each of these has a definite and an unalterable connection, both in Time and in Space, with every other phenomenon throughout the whole range of Nature. Each is, in fact, a product of the past, having its ancestry far back in the cold grey æons of yore, and as well as a parent of the future, having its posterity far forward in the bright blue ages to come. The sublime civilisation of to-day is at once the consequent of the barbarism of yesterday and the antecedent of the sublimer civilisation of to-morrow. Wherever we turn, the uniformity of Law is manifest. No ship courtesies to the kiss of the wind, except in accordance with Law. No spark of fire flies upward, and no spot of rain runs downward, save by Law. The blade of grass that dances in the breeze, the lamb that grazes on the grass, and the man that lives on the lamb, exemplify the ceaseless operation of Law. Nature, always working by Law, is always consistent, always inexorable. She never trifles, never oscillates, never errs. She is eternal, and her laws are invariable.

Thus, then, is established another proposition of the Agnostic Philosophy—the proposition that all the manifestations of the Unknowable are exhibited in accordance with uniform Law.

IGNOTUS.

THE WORSHIP OF RELICS.

SECOND PAPER.

A LEGEND of the Holy Coat of an earlier date is the following. Spun from the wool of a lamb by the Virgin Mary, the Holy Coat, or Grey Coat as it was called, was woven by Saint Helena on the Mount of Olives. Christ wore it at the Crucifixion. Afterwards it came into the hands of a Jew, but was thrown by him into the sea because the bloody stains could not be washed out. Then it was swallowed by a whale. Meanwhile Arendel, or Orendel, the Son of the Christian King, Eygel, dwelling at Trier, went to Palestine to win the heart and hand of the Queen of Palestine, the beautiful Breyde. He suffered shipwreck, but was saved on a coast, where he entered into the service of a fisherman. The fisherman and his servant caught the whale, and found the Grey Coat in its belly. Orendel bought the Coat for thirty pieces of silver, and, putting it on, travelled in it to the Holy Sepulchre. Here he performed such bold and brilliant deeds that Breyde married him and made him King of Jerusalem. As such, he received from an angel the command to hasten to the help of his father, who was besieged in Trier by the Heathens. Orendel and Breyde swiftly and grandly delivered Eydel from the pressing peril. But tidings reached them that the Infidels had gained possession of the Holy Sepulchre, and Orendel had, therefore, to hasten back to Jerusalem. But, warned by an angel, he left at Trier the Grey Coat, which was put into a stone coffin. It is supposed that the genesis of this legend must be sought in the credulous excitement of the first Crusades. The Holy Coat at Trier is usually offered to the admiration and reverence of the faithful every twenty-five years.

In 1844 Bishop Arnoldi enjoined the exposition of the Grey Coat, or Holy Coat, and the faithful hastened to gaze on the marvellous relic. Sceptics scoffed and Protestants doubted : this was natural. But from the very bosom of Catholicism itself a vehement protest rose, and the right of the Holy Coat to a place of honour and reverence was disputed. There was a religious movement so vast and so intense that it seemed the herald of a second Reformation. Promising much, it accomplished little, because its leaders had not Luther's valour, insight, and devotedness ;

because the time for grand, heroic enthusiasms had gone by ; and, perhaps, more than all, because Germany had begun to realise its dream of political unity, and did not wish to be hindered by theological squabbles. Till German unity is consolidated there can be no religious revolution in Germany.

Of all Christian relics, the *Akrobustia* of Jesus is the most memorable and the most sacred. Mention is made of it in an interesting French work on "The Rome of the Popes," published about twenty years ago. This incomparable relic was enshrined in a box of the costliest materials. When a noble or royal personage wished supremely to honour another personage of high degree he presented the precious relic in its precious shrine. What patrician or potentate is now the fortunate possessor of the divine *Akrobustia* ? Hard things have been said by Christians of the Phallic worship ; but wherein did the worship of the divine *Akrobustia* differ from the worship of the Phallos, the Lingam, and kindred objects of obscene rites and orgiastic festivities ?

By some noted Roman Catholic writers the worship of relics has been resolutely attacked. Guibert, of Nogent, a celebrated historian and scholastic philosopher, was born near Clermont in 1053. He was educated at the Abbey of Saint Germer, where he received the lessons of Saint Anselm. Inspired by the confessions of Saint Augustine, he wrote an account of himself, not remarkable either for clearness or elegance. He professed to be free from ambition, and, doubtless, he was sincere in his profession. Nevertheless, at the age of fifty he accepted the direction of the Abbey of Notre-Dame De Nogent. Here he wrote his numerous works ; and here he died in 1124. Familiar with the best Latin authors, he did not succeed in imitating their style : for his own style is decried as being heavy and obscure. His theological productions have worth for us only as curiosities. But he wrote a history of the first Crusade, which is highly esteemed as an honest and trustworthy chronicle. A calm and critical spirit, rare at the period, he proved by his "Treatise on the Relics of the Saints." He displays much sagacity in distinguishing between the true relics and the false ; but he seems inclined to condemn relics altogether, for he says : "Others may think as they like ; but, as for me, I boldly declare that it was never a thing agreeable to God and to his saints to open the tombs of the saints, to drag therefrom the bodies, and to tear asunder the members." The inventors of miracles in connection with relics he reprehends for making God lie as much as they lie themselves. On those who adore the *omphalos* of the Lord Christ he is severe ; and he scourges the monks of Saint Medard De Soissons for offering honour to a pretended tooth of Jesus, of which they were the possessors. The

views of relics held by the more enlightened Catholic priests are identical with those of Guibert De Nogent.

Of relics belonging to the domain of poetry, as much as to the domain of religion, the most illustrious is the Holy Graal. The Arthurian legend was exclusively the creation of the Celtic phantasy ; and *graal* is a Celtic word. As has been well said, and repeatedly said, the Round Table is the centre of two spheres of chivalric poetry ; the one worldly and gallant, the other religious, but not without a blending of tender human feelings. Of all the races that come from the East to the West, the Celtic was the most impulsive, the most imaginative, had keenest and richest sympathy with the Invisible ; or, rather, with the strange, mysterious realm, the dim debatable land between the Seen and the Unseen. Ghosts, fairies, whatsoever was wildest and weirdest, haunted the Celtic brain, enchanted the Celtic heart. The Celts were Idealists, and they had the fate of all Idealists. They were the slaves and the victims of their own dreams ; and they were subdued and scattered, not by more valiant, but by more prosaic and practical mortals. The search for the Holy Graal is the symbol of their history. A popular English bard, who has devoted a series of poems to the heroes of the Round Table, has manifested signal misapprehension of the Celtic character. In the glare of his rhetorical pictorialisms, the mystical, melancholy Celtic figures are wholly unrecognisable. There are many subjects which, from their essential elevation, are unfitted for artistic treatment, for pictorial embellishment. They should be left in their original simplicity. The Knights of the Round Table and their adventures are impressive only when guarded from the desecrating hand of pretentious phrasemakers. The Past is in a prison which cannot be broken—in a tomb which cannot be disturbed. No genius, however stalwart and sublime, can summon the Past forth to the beauty of life. There is a prevailing tendency to modernise ; but to modernise is not to vitalise : it is to scatter abroad bones that were slumbering peacefully. Let us form our acquaintance with the Arthurian legend, and with the search for the Holy Graal, from the ancient chroniclers and poets. The Holy Graal and the search for it are not Christian, except outwardly ; for the follower of Jesus, the believer in the Gospel, is always supposed to gain perfection and blessedness, if he takes the proper means. But the Holy Graal is for individuals, as for nations and races, the vision of a perfection, of a blessedness that can never be won.

Religion is the deepest, the divinest element of human nature. But it has a life of its own, and it cannot be nourished by the barren dogmas of the understanding. It derives its chief food from emotion and imagination. Therefore, relics can as little be rejected as symbols. Both a relic and a symbol was the ark of the Israelites. Not what is

intellectually absurd, but what is morally degrading, we should alone assail in religious faiths and practices. He who went forth to seek the Holy Graal was the more God-like from the pursuit; and the fervent believer who beholds with rapture the Holy Coat of Trier may, perchance, be led by the sight to put on the attire of holy deeds.

They who take a despairing view of the world's religious condition may be inclined to believe that all devotion has become a worship of relics, that there is little living adoration of the living God. Assuredly there never was an age that talked so much about religion, yet was less inspired by it. The community indolently accepts certain dogmas, certain traditions, certain observances, makes a parade of zealous devotedness to them; but really cares for them no further than they are fashionable. In the quivering mists and the ghastly moonlight the tombstones in a churchyard sometimes seem to be dancing. In the mist of doubt and the moonlight of delusion men appear to be seeking heaven with their prayers; but there is no spontaneous emotion: all is mechanical, conventional. Instead of gazing earnestly at the Future, men throw a languid glance at the Past; the glance, however, of timidity, of curiosity, not of eager discipleship. Amazing and tragical is the contrast in these days between the torpor, the deadness, of religion and the vitality of science. Men ceased to be religious, ceased to be Christian, from the moment that they attempted to make Christianity a comfortable creed, a nice, compact, and rational system. In the Middle Ages the Church ruled, leavened, moulded the world; in this frivolous age the world rules, leavens, moulds the Church. The philosopher, Hartmann, has endeavoured to show that religion has mainly a pessimistic source. Christianity boasted that its own source was exclusively pessimistic. To sinful and miserable beings redemption was offered; but a redemption which had nothing to do with earth. This was seen, among other things, in the empire that relics obtained. To the exact extent that relics were the images of death were they the symbols of immortality. Christianity has been called the religion of sorrow; to call it the religion of death would be far nearer the truth. Jesus, the Apostles, and all the early Christians believed that the world was speedily to come to an end. This belief was the inspirer of their resignation and their courage. What were the afflictions of a few short years compared with the joy to be gained and the glory to be revealed? How grand and strong and beautiful Christianity was in the Middle Ages! The idea of death was omnipresent, and half in mockery and half in terror there were dances of death. There was joy from the exuberant force of nations, still in the main barbarous; but multitudes had to snatch joy by gazing, from a despairing, a desolate earth, to heaven, the home of the weary and the sorrowful. Almost every virtue

came to perfection in the Middle Ages ; and some virtues can never again flourish as they flourished then. But it was from the anguish and the chaos that those virtues had their birth and their growth and their divine plenitude, potency, and splendour. Death was everywhere. The associations as well as the actualities of Death were universal ; therefore, the emblems of death were eagerly sought, fondly caressed. From the familiarity with death the Present and the Future became one. The Past was forgotten or disdained. When the Future was so vivid moral and religious growth was naturally deep and rapid. Even when the Church sank into corruption it never lost sight of development, as the indispensable condition of existence. Protestantism, or something equivalent to Protestantism, was inevitable ; and, with regard to the general progress of the world, Protestantism may have done signal service. But Protestantism stopped moral and religious development by making the barren Understanding judge supreme in things the most sacred ; whereas religion is that profound and fervid yearning for the mysterious with which the Understanding has nothing to do. A Rationalistic religion is a contradiction in terms, as cannot be too often proclaimed to this irreligious but canting generation. Instead of satisfying the yearning for the mysterious, Protestantism has imprisoned traditional mysteries in dogmas, and has converted the Bible, which is so rich in treasures, into a degraded and degrading fetish. Where there is extreme religious declension religious revivals are the ghastliest kinds of contortionism. It is as absurd to deem them manifestations of religious vigour as it would be to regard chorea, epilepsy, tetanos, as proofs of strong bodily health. The moral can never take the place of the religious ; but when the religious has grown powerless or pernicious, it must, in renewing its domain, have the moral as a harbinger. John the Baptist preached repentance ; and, at the outset, Christianity was simply a moral insurrection. In his interesting work, entitled "Christ and the Cæsars," Bruno Bauer has delineated, with great force, the majestic action of Stoicism as a precursor of the Gospel. Let our estimate of Mohammed be what it may, we cannot help seeing that Mohammedanism was a grand moral reaction, a puissant moral regeneration, and that, but for Mohammedanism, Christianity would have perished.

Buddhism has more believers than any other religion ; but Gautama was a moral reformer, and Buddhism, at first, was a moral reformation. The system associated with the name of Zoroaster was in the beginning a moral agency. It is a delusion to believe that any man has ever founded a religion. Every religion is the outcome of a deep and immense moral upheaval ; Christianity itself is not an exception. There is a profusion of silly talk in these days about the religion of the future. The persons who take the name of Freethinkers either believe that

religion can be dispensed with altogether, or that the religion of the future is to be the effulgent triumph of science and of liberty. The soul needs food as the body needs food ; and the soul's noblest food is religion ; therefore, religion cannot die. That neither science nor liberty can create a religion must be obvious if we consider that science, as the name indicates, deals with the Known ; while religion ceaselessly and fervently seeks commune with the Unknown ; and that it is as absurd to maintain that liberty can give a religion to mankind as it would be to declare that growth can have its birth, its bounteousness, and its beauty through the air alone, and without the seed, the soil, and the sun.

WILLIAM MACCALL.

(To be continued.)

RELIGION AND WAR.

THE subject I propose to consider is the connection between religion and war, or the relation between the two. I propose to inquire what has been the attitude of religion towards war in the past, what it is in the present, and, as far as we can judge, what it will be in the future. The connection between religion and war in the past has been frequent and intimate. Repeatedly religion has been the cause or the pretext of war; occasionally war has promoted, and even established, religion. Often, when religion has been neither the cause nor the pretext of war, it has inflamed and heightened the passions with which war has been waged. Sometimes religion has ameliorated the conditions of war; while now and then it has been the means of postponing hostilities, or of preventing them altogether. In any case, religion must be held responsible for its attitude, and indeed it cannot remain aloof without stultifying itself, because it claims to influence all human action and all the springs and motives of action, and it can scarcely be worth calling religion if it does not make this claim.

Perhaps it will be well to say here that for me the term *religion* is not restricted in its application by any theological or anti-theological considerations. I hold that there may be religion without belief in God, as well as belief in God without religion. Religion I take to be a binding moral force, consciously and voluntarily recognised, and more or less heartily obeyed. By it a man seeks to bind together the dissonant powers of his own nature into harmonious unity. By it he seeks to place himself in right relations to his fellow-men, to all external nature, and to some supreme Law or Lawgiver, moving and controlling the universe. The particular name assigned to this Law or Lawgiver by any particular religion does not affect its right to be called a religion. Man is a religious animal; but the object of his religious reverence (though possibly always the same Power, and only dimly and partially apprehended by even the clearest intellect) has many and various names. We may call it Jehovah, or Jove, or All-Father, or any other synonym for a Personal God. We may call it Fate, or Nature, the Absolute or Unconditioned, the Totality of Being, Collective Humanity, or the Practice of Virtue, or the Unknowable. We may accept the

philosophic and scientific definition of Herbert Spencer, which is a purely kinetic definition; or we may prefer the purely ethical definition of Matthew Arnold. What I wish to emphasize is that any of these definitions may fairly stand for the object of religious worship, and thus represent a religion. But in dealing with the connection between religion and war in the past I shall have chiefly to deal with Theistic and Supernatural religions, because I find that Atheistic, Agnostic, and Secular religions have been in the main peaceable. Two great historic religions may fairly be described as only ethical, and not theological—viz., Confucianism and Buddhism; and both of these have been non-persecuting and non-aggressive, enjoining and practising peace, though not to the extent of non-resistance under gratuitous attack. Which, then, have been the great persecuting religions of the world—those which have occasioned the most frequent, the cruellest and bloodiest wars? As far as I can find, they have been Judaism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity. I will not too positively assert their “bad eminence” in this respect over all religions; but, at any rate, they will serve as convenient types, because they have prevailed in historic times and over the most civilised portions of the globe.

Let us notice, first, the connection between the Jewish religion and war. Turning to those ancient records which profess to set before us Jewish history and Jewish religion, and to furnish us also with an account of the creation of the world and the origin of man—all from the Jewish standpoint—what do we find? Is it not remarkable, is it not most significant, that, according to Jewish belief, the very “beginning of strife,” which verily is “like the letting forth of water,” the first serious quarrel, the first shedding of man’s blood by his fellow-man, the first murder, the first death, was directly connected with religion—sprang, in fact, out of a religious difference? Yes, the “revealed religion” of the Jew reveals to us religion not only as furnishing the incidental *irritamenta malorum*, but as being in itself the very *fons et origo mali*, the *teterrima causa belli*. *Credat Judæus*, let the Jew believe it, and let us believe him when he says so, for of a surety no race and no religion can speak with more authority on this point! It is indeed unconscious testimony, but it is none the less, and perhaps all the more, “worthy of all acceptance.” The intended moral is not the same as mine; but mine is latent there nevertheless. Let us look at this incident rather closely, and examine it with some degree of minuteness, because it illustrates this part of my subject so well, and really contains, as it were in a nutshell, the whole history of religious wars, or wars of religion.

Many of us have been familiar with the story from our infancy, and perhaps first became acquainted with it through some simply nursery

version such as this :—

“ Abel was a good man ;
Eve was his mother :
Cain was a bad man :
He killed his brother.”

But we grow up, we learn to read and think for ourselves ; and the results, at least, of the most profound scholarship are available for us to examine : Literature supplants and destroys Dogma ; the higher Biblical criticism enables us to view these Scriptures in other, and probably truer, relations ; and our childish beliefs about this and much else we have “ put away as childish things.” Some critics regard the whole story as entirely imaginary and apocryphal, and not worthy of notice. Others think there may be some substratum of truth, but that a correct knowledge of the facts, could we but obtain it, would probably oblige us to reverse the statements of the Bible story in every particular. As thus : If Cain did kill Abel, it served him right, as he probably began the quarrel. He may even have tried to sacrifice Cain, and found that Cain objected, because he didn't see where his share of the profit was to come from. It is certain that the Jews, like most other nations, at one period of their development offered human sacrifices, although the priestly historians, writing so late as the more civilised era of Ezra, have laboured to suppress the fact. Some say that, instead of Cain having killed Abel, it was most likely Abel who committed that crime on Cain. Lastly, it is even probable on the theory of evolution, because Cain's was a purer religion than Abel's, and on historic grounds, because man is known to have been a nomad or wandering shepherd before he was a farmer or gardener, that Abel was really the elder brother, and Cain the younger.

My own view of the story is that it is a representative legend, either invented by Jewish scribes of the priestly party, or borrowed by them from some other Asiatic tribe, and inserted in the sacred books of the Jews in order to glorify their shepherd tribe as especially chosen of God, and in order also to justify their costly and cruel system of bloody sacrifices, which the reforming prophetic party had begun to call in question and to denounce.

“ Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.” There you have it ! Abel is a typical man, who stands for a whole shepherd tribe, nomads, wandering shepherds and drovers, of fierce and savage dispositions, of wild, irregular, and predatory habits—in fact, just like those tribes of Central Asia whom Russia has lately introduced to “ the resources of civilisation.” Cain is also a typical man, and stands for an agricultural, a farming and gardening tribe,

settled down to peaceful and innocent pursuits, yet prepared to hold their own, and to defend their lives and property ; and all the more tenaciously because they had "a stake in the country," but not at all likely to want to fight or kill, except in self-defence.

"And in process of time it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord." His was a simple and natural religion, involving little, if any, waste, and, in its pristine purity, offering no scope for coarseness or cruelty. Conceiving of his Deity as some magnified man or woman, he thinks that what satisfies and delights his own appetite will be also acceptable to his god ; so he brought of that wherein his wealth consisted. The Romans and other nations held annual festivals in honour of Ceres, goddess of corn ; Pomona, goddess of apples and fruits generally ; and Bacchus, god of wine ; though some of the festivals at length became licentious orgies. We have a survival of the innocent offerings of Cain in our Harvest Thanksgivings and Harvest Home Suppers, and perhaps also in the bread and wine which form the elements of the Eucharist, or Thanksgiving—an early name for the great Christian Sacrament.

"And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof." Perfectly natural, too, to him, in his stage of civilisation. He brought what he had. He lived on meat himself, and thought that it would be acceptable to his god. He did not think it necessary to exchange his animals for anything else, or did not care to, or could not well effect a barter. So, while Cain thought his god was a vegetarian, Abel thought his god preferred mutton, with some of the fat. And, if "the wish was father to the thought," we see the same or similar conduct, presumably dictated by similar motives, in those respectable modern Christians who are so much more ready to give goods to a bazaar than money to a collection or subscription. In later times the Hebrew shepherd tribe, having become settled and partly agricultural, came to think that their god would prefer the more mixed and varied diet in which they now indulged, and so they gave him beef, and goat's flesh, and pigeons, and kidneys, and most kinds of edible and toothsome meats, except pork ; and for bread and vegetables there were the table of shewbread, the wave-offering, and the heave-offering, and pancakes ; and, to wash it all down, there was a drink-offering of a fourth, a third, and even, sometimes, "half an hin of wine."

J. ASHFORD JENKINSON.

(To be continued.)

THE GOD IDEA.

FOURTH PAPER.

LEAVING the Aryan stream, and turning back to that division of the great Iranian family which migrated to the valley of the Nile, and which we call the Egyptian, we find a very similar religious system in vogue among them from the very earliest times, as existed among the Aryans. The first settlers in Egypt carried with them, no doubt, the primitive religious conceptions of their Iranian fathers, which were derived from a contemplation of the various phenomena of nature, as previously stated; and it is highly probable that, at a very early period, they gave considerable attention to the movements of the heavenly bodies, for from monumental inscriptions, unearthed in modern times, which geologists inform us must have lain *sub terra* for several thousands of years, we learn that the Egyptians, at that remote time, well understood the theory of the precession of the equinoxes, placing the zodiacal constellation of the bull at the vernal equinoctial point in the period prior to about B.C. 4300, and that of the ram in the period immediately following. It is probable, therefore, that hundreds of years before this time these primitive men of the Nile were engaging themselves with the study of astronomy, and using effective astronomical instruments, which indicates a high state of civilisation; and this is further borne out by the fact that, at the commencement of the first Egyptian dynasty, about the year B.C. 5000, when Menes reigned over Egypt, there was every appearance of a very advanced civilisation that had lasted for centuries. From the "Book of the Dead" and the Pisse Papyrus (most of the former written at latest prior to B.C. 4000, and the latter very soon after) we derive a tolerably accurate notion of the mythological system of the Egyptians during the first portion of the Old Empire, and probably many hundreds of years previously; while, from the writings of Herodotus, Diodorus, Plutarch, and Manetho, we learn the progress the religion made during the 4,000 following years.

The "Book of the Dead" treats principally of the refining processes through which the spirits of dead people passed in the under-world, or Cher Nuter, before being purified sufficiently to inherit a state of bliss and become spirits of light (Chu) to be absorbed into the sun at the point where it is born, and taken within it to An, the celestial Heliopolis.

Before the time of Menes the religion of Egypt was animistic, blended with a vague kind of sun-worship, the supreme deity being, at Thinis-Abydos, the ancient capital, called Osiris, the god of gods, son of Seb, god of earth, and Nu, goddess of the heavenly ocean, and grandson of Ra. Osiris was the sun-god of the daily and annual circle, who enjoyed his spouse, Isis, the great mother, during the summer months and the daytime, after which he was overcome by the evil Set-Typhon and his wife Nephthys, and tortured in the under-world, until released by his son Horus, the conqueror sun-god, who rose into the upper world as the avenger of his father's defeat, and liberated the soul of Osiris from torture, to be absorbed by, and for ever shine forth in the constellation *Orion*, as the soul of Isis shines for ever in *Sirius*. At Heliopolis, An, On, or Para, the city of the sun, Ra was worshipped as supreme god, who as Tum, the hidden god, fought the demon of darkness, the serpent Apap, in Amenti, and who rose again from the under-world as Harmachis. Later, when Menes reigned as the first monarch of the Old Empire (*circa* B.C. 5000), Memphis, or Mennefer, was the capital city, in which Phtah was worshipped as the supreme god or creator of the world (called Sekru, the slain god, when in the lower world), together with Ma, goddess of righteousness, and Imhotep, the chief of priests, whose name signified "I come in peace," and who formed the third part of a kind of trinity, with Phtah and Ma. All these, and other minor deities, such as deified kings, etc., were represented on earth by incarnations in the shape of animals, Ra, Osiris, and Phtah, the supreme gods, being manifested in the sacred bull Apis, representing the sun at the vernal equinoctial point in the zodiacal constellation *Taurus*. During six dynasties these gods were worshipped peacefully, their incarnations and religious rites being protected by the kings; but about the year B.C. 3800 the kingdom appears to have dropped to bits, its religion to have been mixed up in a most confused manner, and its people divided into a number of small nationalities, with separate kings and separate laws; until, at length, the whole country was once more united under the reigning monarchs of the eleventh dynasty (Second Empire), whose capital was Thebes, and whose popular deity was Amen, the hidden god, called also Amen-Ra, to signify that he was not only the sun-god in the under-world, but also the rising and conquering sun-god of the early morn and spring of the year. In fact, Amen was the sun-god of the whole revolution, the Theban Yao, one with his father Osiris in the mid-day and mid-summer, one with his counterpart Horus at the early morn and spring of the year, and one with Tum in the darkness of night and winter; just as Zeus of the Greeks was Zeus Amen (Jupiter Ammon), Olympian Zeus, Zeus Yao, and Stygian Zeus, according to the season of the year.

Between the Middle Empire and the New Empire another catastrophe occurred to the Egyptians, in the form of an invasion of the Hyksos, or shepherd kings of Arabia, who overran the whole country, destroyed the temples, and levied heavy tribute on the people, eventually settling down for four centuries as Kings of Egypt, adopting many of the native customs, and introducing many Semitic deities and observances. At last the Hyksos were driven forth, and the New Empire commenced with the eighteenth dynasty; but a considerable difference was now found to exist in the religion of the country, partly on account of the introduction of Semitic rites, and partly owing to the change that had taken place at the vernal equinoctial point, by the precessional movement of the zodiacal constellation *Taurus*. The vernal equinoctial point was now (B.C. 2000) in the sign *Aries*, and therefore the principal deities should be no longer represented as incarnate bulls, but as incarnate rams. Accordingly, we find that after this date the bull-god Apis, or Serapis, gradually fell into disrepute; and Amen, who was now the supreme and representative god, was worshipped as an incarnate ram, being depicted as a man wearing ram's horns.

Another mode of worshipping the young sun-god, born at the winter solstice, December 25th, was that known as the Mysteries of the Night, or Passion of Osiris, at which an idol of the infant Horus, or Amen, called also the Holy Word, was presented to the people in its mother's arms, or exposed to view in a crib for the adoration of the people by the priests, who were, according to Adrian, called Bishops of Christ (*χριστός*, the anointed one); and when King Ptolemy, B.C. 350, asked the meaning of the custom, he was informed that it was a sacred mystery. During these mysteries, which took place annually, bread, after sacerdotal rites, was mystically converted into the body of Osiris, to be partaken of by all the faithful, who were called Christians; and an idol representing the body of the god, stretched on a cross within a circle, was placed upon the mystic table for adoration and praise.

The winter solstitial point is really December 21st; but the ancients always kept the festival of the birth of the sun-god on December 25th, because at twelve o'clock, midnight between December 24th and 25th the uppermost stars in the constellation *Virgo* made their appearance above the horizon, being the first indication of the birth of the new sun, which had taken place exactly three days and three nights previously. This gave rise to the popular superstition that the new sun-god was born of a virgin, from whose womb he had been trying to extricate himself for the space of three days and three nights. From this the idea prevailed that the sun-god underwent similar periods of struggle also at the summer solstice and the two equinoctial points; and thus arose the legend of the two crucifixions, the one at the vernal equinox, when the

sun in *Aries* crossed the Equator and was crucified as the "Lamb of God" on March 21st, commencing the ascension to heaven on March 25th; and the other at the autumnal equinox, when the sun in *Libra* (the balance of justice) crossed the Equator and was crucified as the "Just Man" on September 23rd, descending to hell for three days and three nights, after which he emerged into the shades until born again at the winter solstice.

A very popular deity of the Lower Nile was Mises (drawn from water), the sun-god of wine and mirth, who was born on Mount Nyssa (Sinai), and was found as a babe in a box floating on the Red Sea, and who, by means of his magic wand, took his army dry-shod through the Sea and the rivers Orontes and Hydaspes, drew water from rocks, and caused the land through which he passed to flow with milk, wine, and honey. He was depicted with a ram's horn on his forehead, being the personification of the new-born sun delivering the world from the powers of darkness, and was afterwards worshipped in Phœnicia as Iês, in Greece as Dionysos (Διόνυσος, God of Nyssa), son of Zeus, and in Rome as Bacchus. The temples dedicated to this sun-god were, in the time of the Greek kings of Egypt, very gorgeous, the mystic table having upon it, not only the infant in its cradle, the transubstantiated bread, and the Osirian crucifix, but also a bleeding lamb, the emblem of the sun-god at the vernal equinox, over which was placed the Phœnician name of Mises, Iês, in Greek capitals (ΙΗΣ), surrounded by the rays of glory, to signify that he was the risen and crucified sun-god, and one with Horus and Amen-Ra.

Turning to the third great division of the Iranians—viz., the Semites, who migrated to the Valley of the Euphrates, we find a more or less complicated religious system, varying in accordance with the amount of intercommunication which took place between the Semites and the tribes belonging to the Aryan, Mongolian, and Egyptian families. The earliest Semitic settlement was in the district stretching from the Euphrates to the Red Sea and Mediterranean, and their religion was, at first, one of pure animistic polydæmonism, varying enormously in details of drama in the different tribes, but exhibiting in all common characteristics.

All early Semitic peoples worshipped the sun-god, Shamsh, and all were moon, planet, and star-worshippers to a very large extent; but, as the race became divided into Northern and Southern Semites, a distinct difference gradually arose between the religious cults of the two branches. The Southern, or Arab, tribes, on account of their more isolated situation, retained the original Semitic mythology, worshipping the sun as their chief god, Shamsh, the moon as his consort, and the stars and planets as inferior gods and goddesses, the *Platades*

being objects of special homage. Shamsh was father of all, and disappeared to the underworld at night to rest in slumber until awakened into activity in the morning as Yachavah, his son, who became one with his father.

The Northern Semites, on penetrating, at a later period, the borders of Mesopotamia, came in contact with a powerful and advanced civilisation, which had been already established by the Akkadian branch of the Northern Mongolian family, and thus the original Semitic religion became very much modified by the introduction into it of many of the Mongol, as well as some also of the Aryan, myths.

Very little is known of the Akkadian mythology; but it is pretty certain that they were, at a very early period, acquainted with the science of astronomy, and that the Chaldeans, their successors, who were a mongrel race, partly Akkadian and partly Semitic, invented the cuneiform writing to take the place of the old Mongolian hieroglyphic characters. From what we know of the religion of the old Mongol Chinese empire prior to 1200 B.C., it was a kind of spirit-worship, the Shang-ti, or supreme spirit, being Thian (Heaven), who, in co-operation with Heu-thu (earth), produced everything. Man, according to this cultus, had two souls, one of which ascended after death to heaven, while the other descended into the earth, both being absorbed respectively into Thian and Heu-thu.

The Akkadians, who were but a branch of the same race as the progenitors of the ancient Chinese, also worshipped spirits, the greatest of whom was Ana (the highest heaven), the next Mulge (the hidden heaven in the interior of the earth), and the third Ea, the god of the atmosphere and of moisture. After these came an inferior group—Uru-ki, the moon-god; Ud, the sun-god; and Im, the wind-god. The spirits were divided into good and bad, which were constantly at war with each other; and thus was introduced into the religion of the semi-Semitic Chaldeans the dualistic notion of good and evil existing in conflict throughout all time.

The Northern Semites may be conveniently divided into four distinct nations—viz., the Chaldeans (Babylonians and Assyrians), who were partly Semitic and partly Akkadian, the Aramæans, the Canaanites, and the Phœnicians. These peoples soon became acquainted with the astronomical learning of the Akkadians, and were taught the wonderful phenomenon of the precession of the equinoxes; and it is highly probable that the fact of the vernal equinoctial sign having changed shortly before B.C. 2000 from that of the Bull to that of the Ram or Lamb had much to do with the changing of the old Semitic name Shamsh to that of El, as a designation of the sun-god, El (𐎎𐎵) being the old Chaldean word for Ram.

Owing to the mixed character of the Chaldean nation, their religion was a peculiar blending of the Akkadian and Semitic mythologies, El Ilu, or Ilah, being their chief deity ; but, instead of sinking into the lower world each night for peaceful slumber, as the older Shamsh had done, he became the victim of the wicked demons, who tormented him all through the dark hours, until he was avenged by his son Yachavah, who thereby became the conqueror and saviour god, one with his father Ilu, and yet different. To a great extent the religion of the purely Semitic tribes of the north was affected by this Chaldean myth ; but there arose many points of difference between them. The Assyrians worshipped El under the name of Asur, their national deity, the Babylonians converting the name into Bel ; while the pure Semites worshipped him as Bel and Baal in the west, and as Al in the south. Out of the story of El and Yachavah was fabricated the great Adonis myth of the Chaldeans, which became so popular in future times among all the Semites except the Arabs of the south, who retained the original character of the supreme Shamsh, El or Al (afterwards Allah), and his son Yachavah, afterwards Yahouh. This Adonis drama, as originally conceived, was that El reigned in supreme power and glory in the highest heaven, enjoying the delights of his spouse Istar, but that in the autumn the wicked gods of winter overcame him, separating him from his lover, and tormenting him all through the winter months, until in the spring he conquered the evil demons as Adon, the beautiful youth, who is restored to his mourning Istar. The worship of Adonis, or Adon, was generally adopted by all the Northern Semites, the god becoming eventually the most popular deity of the Semitic people, being known as Yao (ΙΑΩ of the Greeks) to the Phœnicians, Yahoo (יָהוּ) to the Canaanites, and Tammuz to the Aramæans, while his lover Istar became the Phœnician Ashtoreth. Iês, the god of wine, and Greek Dionysos, was another saviour sun-god worshipped largely by the Phœnicians ; but was most probably of Egyptian origin, being identical with Mises, the Egyptian Bacchus. As already stated, the Southern Semites of Arabia retained, in common with their Ethiopian brethren, the old and simpler worship of the supreme god El and his son Yahouh, although, owing to their propinquity to Egypt, many strange inferior deities had been introduced into Arabia from that country, which resulted, in much later times, in the formation of various religious sects, each having a particular tribal deity, or patron god, though all recognising El as supreme. One of these tribes, with Yahouh as their tribal god, on which account they were called Yahoudi, having left their native Arabian home, penetrated far into the country of the Northern Semites, learning from the Canaanites, Phœnicians, and Babylonians the strange legends of the Northern Semitic deities, including the Adonis myth ; and, after

wandering about for many years, one large portion of their tribe settled in the delta of the Nile, while the remainder crossed the desert of Syria and approached the confines of Babylonia, finally settling in the barren and rocky interior of Syria. and making the spot where now stands the small town of El-Khuds (Jerusalem) their headquarters. During their long wanderings they became acquainted not only with the various Semitic myths of the north, but also with the Babylonian and Persian legends, and incorporated a quantity of strange deities and customs into their own rude and primitive religion, thus manufacturing a very complicated and weird system of mythology.

HERBERT JUNIUS HARDWICKE, M.D., F.R.C.S.

(To be continued next month.)

LAMENT OF ABRAH-NA-POGUE.

OH! sad is the bosom and note of the bird
 For her lost mate complaining alone on the tree;
 But sadder and sorer my passion is stirred
 With bitterest dole that thou'st severed from me.

As the breeze to the sea, as the sun to the morn,
 As the star to the eve, as the moon to the night,
 Thou wert breath, warmth, and light to my being, till torn
 From my bosom; but now I am desolate quite.

Oh! joy, art thou fretting? Must sorrow abide?
 Without thee, my own love, life's bitter and drear;
 It were better to sleep in the grave by thy side
 Than, when thou hast left me, live sorrowing here.

THOMAS MEAD.

THE POPULAR RELIGIOUS FAITH.

THE DOCTRINE OF DESIGN—(*Continued*).

IN combatting the Christian doctrine of Design in the June number of *THE AGNOSTIC*, Julian showed the fallacy of the famous watch illustration, and concluded his paper with the remark that the Design argument wholly ignored the doctrine of Development. It presupposes that the stars were always such as they are now, and never nebulae; and that man at the beginning was made what he now is, and has not developed from lower types into his present status and condition.

In the July number the subject was continued, and Julian took for his text that no wisdom of design can be assumed, unless it can be shown that the same design in all cases answers the same wise end. Thus, if half the watches made fail in keeping or marking time correctly, it would show either bad design or bad workmanship. This led to a consideration of the structure of birds for flight, and it was shown that hosts of birds cannot fly at all, while some cannot even raise themselves from the ground; and that a similar failure occurs in seed of all sort, for, although seed is designed for the propagation of its kind, by far the larger part is unproductive. To this it may be added that the light of glow-worms, claimed as a wise design to guide the male to the female, may answer such a purpose in some particular cases, yet no such object can be assigned to hosts of other luminous larvæ. Similarly, the stridulating noises of some insects may serve for sexual attraction; but quite as many insects of both sexes, among the Neuroptera as well as the Coleoptera, possess this power without the same object;* and it is folly to ascribe wisdom of design, unless the same design in all cases answers the same wise end.

In this, the third paper, Julian will take for his subject the fact that adaptability to an end is by no means always a proof of design. It may be so in some instances; but in numerous others it is by no means the case.

The well-known discovery of glass by some ship-wrecked Phœnicians

* The Guinea-pig has teeth which are shed *before it is born*. Such teeth could never subserve the masticatory purpose for which, we are told, teeth are contrived. Similarly, the female dugong has tusks which never cut the gums.

will readily occur to all readers of this paper. Glass, without doubt, is admirably adapted for the admission of light into dwellings; but the discovery was a pure accident, and the design followed afterwards. It would be no less than absurd to claim for these shipwrecked mariners a vast foreseeing design, because they made a fire of dry sea-weed on the sand, and discovered next morning, to their utter amazement, that a vitrification had taken place. Intelligent observation may be allowed them, but no wisdom of design.

Take another illustration, the self-acting valve of Newcomen's steam-engine. This engine was fitted with two taps—one to introduce steam into the cylinder, and the other to throw in cold water to condense it. When tap A was closed and B open, steam was forced against the bottom of the piston and raised it; but when A was open and B closed, a rush of cold water from the reservoir condensed the steam, created a vacuum, and the piston, of course, descended. The shutting and opening of these taps was performed by what is called a *scoggan* or rod attached to an oscillating beam, one end of which was fixed in the wall. When the beam descended it caused tap A to open and tap B to shut; but when the beam rose it caused tap A to shut and tap B to fly open.

Here, without doubt, considerable ingenuity is shown. The *scoggans* attached to the oscillating beam to open and shut the two taps at the exact moment mark most distinctly a curious adjustment of means to an end. This little piece of mechanism whereby the piston is worked, and the whole engine is made active as a thing of life, seems as clearly to demonstrate reflective wisdom and forethought as the heart of man does; and, if it had been a work of nature, it would have been triumphantly flourished as an incontestable proof of the goodness, wisdom, and prescience of its maker. But what is the fact? This self-acting valve owes its invention to the idleness of a Cornish lad, a mere child who liked play better than work—marbles better than steam-engines—and who, in truth, ought rather to have been chided for naughtiness than commended for his wisdom.

M. Arago, the astronomer, tells the tale. The boy's name was Humphrey Potter, who was employed by Newcomen to open and shut two taps at the proper moment. It so happened that some boys came to play in the vicinity, and the shouts of the young urchins moved the boy Potter almost to madness. Play he must. He could not bear to hear the shouts and laughter, and not join in the game. What was to be done? He knew that the descent and rise of the beam was the sign for shutting and opening the taps, so it flashed into his mind that he could so fasten the handles of the taps to the *scoggan* that, when the beam descended, it should close one tap and open the other,

and when it rose it should reverse the operation. No sooner thought than done. A top-string served his purpose: the contrivance acted famously, and Humphrey was released to play as long as he liked. In the words of M. Arago: "How humiliating soever such an acknowledgment may be, this beautiful invention was the suggestion of a mere child, whose only wish was to join his companions in a game of play."

Here, at any rate, is adaptation without design. Play was the design; a self-acting valve was the thing accomplished. A stag was shot at, but a tyrant was laid low; the philosopher's stone was the object of search, and Dresden china was the object revealed; gunpowder was the thing expected, and Glauber salts the thing discovered. It would be a gross perversion to call this marvellous adaptability to an end wise prescience or wisdom of design. It was nothing of the kind; it was sharpness aroused for the sake of shirking work. The motive was blameable, though the end was useful and proved wise.

Take another example: the screw-propeller invented by Mr. Hicks, of Bolton. This invention was suggested in much the same way as the system of gravitation by the fall of an apple. Newton was sitting in the garden of Mrs. Conduitt, at Woolsthorpe, a village near Grantham, in Lincolnshire, when an apple fell at his feet. Why did the apple fall to the earth, thought Newton, and not to the clouds? Above 999 persons of every 1,000 would have laughed at the "silly" surmise; but not one would have been able to furnish an answer to the perplexed philosopher. Why did it fall one way rather than another? thought Newton. Why do all things fall to the earth—at least, all things in the neighbourhood of the earth? He thought and thought and thought, and arrived at his magnificent discovery of Universal Gravitation.

Mr. Hicks made his discovery of the screw-propeller in much the same way. He was strolling one evening in the suburbs of Bolton, when some seeds of a sycamore tree fell at his feet. The young man wondered to see them rotate in their fall, and, on picking one up, he observed that the seed had two wings, turned slightly in opposite directions; and on this hint he set to work to make his screw-propeller.

The screw, no doubt, is a means to an end; but the design must be traced to the sycamore seed. Dean Paley and the present Archbishop of York would attribute the creation of the sycamore tree to God. Yes; but they would hardly be prepared to say that God, from all eternity, designed in his foreknowledge that the seed of the tree should possess two wings, so adjusted as to rotate in falling, in order to suggest to Mr. Hicks the invention of the screw-propeller. Yet to this length the principle of design would carry us.

A still better case is furnished to us by the invention of the telescope. Descartes, in his "Treatise on Dioptrics," says: "To the

disgrace of our men of science, this most admirable invention is due to a pure accident. It is now thirty years ago that a man named James Metins, of no education, took it into his head to look through two burning glasses at the same time. As it happened, one was convex and the other concave. He stuck them, for convenience sake, into a piece of elder from which the pith had been removed. This was the first telescope." If anything could show design, where could we look for a better example than to the telescope? It has shown us new worlds. The tube, the character of the glasses, the adjustment, everything about the instrument seems to bespeak a knowledge of optics—a knowledge of mechanics—a mighty foreknowledge of its most important uses. We talk of the eye as an undeniable example of design; but the telescope is a far-seeing eye, and was invented by such an accident as any child playing in a glass-shop might have stumbled on. James Metins had no more idea that his two glasses set in a pop-gun tube would make a telescope than a schoolboy expects to find out perpetual motion when he whips his humming-top. He had no more idea that his idle freak would lead to the enormous results of astronomy and revolutionise the world than a child expects to set the world on fire by rubbing flame from two white stones. No one can deny that the telescope shows design; but the design does not show a designing mind. Here, at any rate, is means to an end; but the connection is the result of idle accident. It is contrivance without intention—the wisest of inventions without wisdom in the inventor. Let no man after this parade the eye and ear as indisputable examples of premeditated design.

JULIAN.

(To be continued.)

THE AFTER-GLOW OF CHRISTIANITY.

RELIGIOUS belief, in its individual effect, may pass through three separate stages. It may exist as (1) a fully-operative force—the unquestioned rule of faith and director of moral action; as (2) a diminishing force, less and less influential, decaying in its power, until, at last, the belief itself is quitted; and (3) as a force of after-effect, or reaction, obtaining in regard to the individual, retrospectively, and colouring his new persuasion more or less evidently.

Of religious belief in the first two stages we have instance and exposition in abundance. The last-named, if it has ever been recognised, has been more neglected. Yet every religious system leaves a trace behind it, if the individual be sufficiently sensitive to exhibit the result in himself after he has embraced another faith. This after-effect of Christianity has its distinguishing features, apart altogether from the idiosyncrasy of the person affected. There are leanings and prejudices which every one may be said to bring with him from the midst of a quitted Christianity. Some of these may be worthy of notice.

Coming from a creed lavish in the matters of reward and punishment, an expectation corresponding thereto lingers in the mind. One who has been reared in a faith which promises and threatens by turns (which is mainly composed of promises and threats, and only atones for the semi-barbarism of the latter by the pure humanness of the former) experiences something of a blank in coming to a new thought system, in which all these things are conspicuous by absence. It is true that we are not accustomed to hear much formal complaint on the part of new recruits as to the lack of any damnatory clauses in our confession of faith; but we have, at times, to combat with a singular yearning which they are wont to express for something in Agnosticism which shall, to them, in some measure, stand in the room and stead of eternal rewards. It is a request for which we are utterly unprepared, and to which we cannot in any way respond. The wish to "get some good" out of a philosophical standpoint such as our own may be profoundly unreasonable, but it is not inexplicable. It is one of the natural after-effects of a forsaken Christian belief; and, in this light, it explains other points which else were obscure. It shows, to begin with, that Agnosticism—a philosophical attitude towards sundry life-problems—

does *not*, in a certain sense, supply the place of a popular religious belief, more especially in so far as the emotions are concerned. Nineteenths of popular alienation from us (in which we include much unfriendly criticism) is based upon the supposition that Agnosticism *does* pretend, in some way or other, to do this, and that we, as the apologists of Agnosticism, are continually endeavouring to press forward our views as a fairly exact substitute for the popular religious faith. Now, in this sense, as something which will exactly fit into the vacant space left by a discredited belief, Agnosticism were an utter failure. It, however, makes no such pretension, nor are we concerned to teach that it does so in any way. Yet a change amounting to a mental revolution may be wholly desirable—indeed, logically imperative—although the new position may by no means occupy the same ground as the old, or in any wise profess to do so. It may be altogether essential for the recovery of sound health, if not for the very saving of life itself, that a patient should be induced, if not compelled, gradually to doff his invalid wrappings, to discontinue his draughts and cordials one by one, and to quit the enervating atmosphere of his sick room for the bracing outside air. Yet the change may be, at first, anything but welcome to the convalescent, however expedient it may be. That which is pleasant, grateful, and soothing is not always that which is healthful; and, in many respects, the religionism of to-day resembles too much the stifling relaxation of the sick-chamber. If the rewards and punishments held forth by supernaturalism be baseless, it is only folly either to hanker after the one or to be influenced by fear of the other. Nor should such things, part of the indispensable machinery of ecclesiasticism, be looked for elsewhere than in their fitting localities.

Another habit of mind which Christianity transmits re-actively seems, at first sight, a singular one. It appears contradictory of its own express teaching. For that faith has said that a man shall reap as he has sown; but it has, nevertheless, withdrawn the dictum next moment, practically declaring that the sowing makes little difference in the end, and that the harvest may be of a wholly different nature from the seed, the result of the sowing having been changed by an afterthought. Of course, teaching such as this (wholly immoral at root) is much altered by the time that it reaches Agnosticism, and becomes visible therein re-actively.

But there is a widespread conviction abroad in regard to our tenets which is quite recognisable as a variety of the same loose expectation—a conviction that, somehow or other, the laws of causation may—and indeed ought, good-naturedly, to—be relaxed; a hope that, in some mysterious way, every one may have a certain right to the very highest consolations of philosophy, with all the benefits accompanying

and flowing from them, not only without money and without price, but without regard to any pains or labour bestowed in the way of acquisition. And this uncertain hope is astutely brought to bear in two ways, even from within, against Agnosticism—on the ground, firstly, that its refinement of thought involves practical exclusion of the uneducated: and, secondly, that a system thus markedly esoteric cannot possibly be calculated to effect any widespread benefit. Is it not abundantly clear that, had the partially-communistic, partly loosely-moral, bases upon which Christianity is propped not existed beforehand, such objections to our Agnosticism would not have been so strongly urged, if urged at all. Fair play itself directs differently. It is surely time to begin, then, with the very elements of that which is even below morality, in the sense of preceding it, and to insist that the results of a man's personal mental effort pertain to himself by title indefeasible; and that, entered upon as by right on the part of others who have *not* contributed thereto, and who base their claim upon the especial ground of non-contribution, the action and the sanctioning thereof alike were theft. Yet some, with the nineteenth-century moral sense relaxed, are accustomed to call this "hard," and to insist that all second-class and undeserving B's should be at once made equal to first-class and deserving A's in every respect, in the name of eternal fitness and justice, and upon pain of the stones immediately crying out, although all nature shrieks against any other creed than that of the race to the swift and the combat to the strong.

How timorous, after all, the contention of unfairness is! The suggestion of victorious physical strength misleads those who, inwardly conscious of no great robustness, fear despondingly that, if pith and muscle be really the conditions of ultimate success, they will, personally, be left far behind. Neither physical nor mental strength, in reality, overcomes the world. Strong, even omnipotent, in either way, the prize is not necessarily yours. The race *is* to the swift, and the battle to the strong; but thews and sinews of either sort are towards the winning. Humility and tranquillity are as strong as any. Of course, it *is* a contest, after all. Dulness will make you a laggard in any strife. To award the laurel to one hopelessly overmatched were not even poetic justice.

Perhaps, also, to a kindred prejudice we are indebted for the misconception of our effort, not to elevate the recommendation of Agnosticism (that were impossible), but to free it from certain popular accompaniments. It is taken for granted that any presentation of particular views, aiming, by preference, at the attention of the educated and cultured, has an element of unfairness in it. It runs counter to the prejudices before alluded to, that anything conducing to mental or

physical amelioration should be addressed to those in any way privileged ; *for there was* (that is the root of the matter) *no privilege*, no recommendation, required—no requisite condition, save that of common humanity, in connection with that world-wide creed which was all-inclusive, because non-exclusive ; which recognised equally, as possible heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, those who wore the imperial purple and those whose servile feet, in the slave-market, bore evidence of other “preparation” than that of “the Gospel of peace.” Of course, this prejudice is partly rooted in error. An election by preference colours Christianity throughout ; but it is half-concealed, and it serves a purpose to represent the system as all-embracing, when another, confessedly exclusive—indeed, naturally restricted—has to be assailed. It is also, in this connection, a libel even upon the uneducated classes to assume that, in order to reach their ears and enlist their sympathies, a *descent* in the class of language employed will at all avail—a descent, not in the direction of greater plainness of speech (which is often practicable enough), but one (*facilis descensus*) effected at the cost of good manners.

It were all one, we admit, *whose* suffrages we sought, *if* we had a universal gift to proffer for the acceptance of the multitude. But we have no such guerdon to bestow, and that may conclude the matter. Ours is a Revelation of the unrevealed, but not from on high ; therefore, wholly mundane and temporal conditions apply in connection therewith. He that hath clean hands, a pure heart, and wisdom to discern has the gift of all we have to bestow. He that can receive it, let him receive it.

H. DUNDAS.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF UNBELIEF.

SECOND PAPER.

SEEING that there is so much that must come before the human mind to be at once dismissed, and that so many various and conflicting theories will present themselves before the intellect of every person who thinks upon ever so limited a scale, the greater portion of which will doubtless have to be rejected, our duty in regard to the matter is as evident as the sun at noonday. Truth is a gem of which all men are professedly in search, and all are obligated to discover and take hold of as much of it as possible; and the only way in which this can be done is by rejecting the error—or that which appears to the searcher to be such—for his own intellectual powers are the only tests which he can apply to ascertain what is truth and what is falsehood. Hence he must reject that which appears to him to be irrational, and thus so far he becomes an unbeliever. Despite the absurd claims of theology, the investigation of any matter that comes before the mind, and the search for truth which is the object of the investigation, must land in unbelief. If it is said that this unbelief refers only to error, the question will arise, What is error? For is it not clear that, as no two minds are constituted alike, and as no two persons can possibly follow out, in every particular and in precisely the same manner, the same line of thought and investigation, the conclusions reached cannot be the same always in the case of different individuals? It is possible that all will discover some truth; but truth, like man, is many-sided; and, hence, some things which seem phases of truth to one man will be classed with error by another. Freethought teaches the great fundamental truth—namely, that man has an absolute right to think freely, unfettered by tradition and uncontrolled by creeds and dogmas. This is the essence of all true thinking; for no one can think successfully in shackles, and truth can never be properly reached while thought is in chains. Protestantism boasts that it not only allows the right of private judgment, but that such right is its cardinal principle and watchword. Now, true private judgment means the right to arrive at any opinion which can be legitimately reached by the laws of thought and the canons of logic, or the term is a misleading misnomer. It was the violation of this principle that made the conduct of the

Protestant reformers so thoroughly inconsistent. They robbed private judgment of its real essence by compelling its conclusions to harmonise with their own, and thus limiting that freedom which is absolutely necessary to private judgment. Luther, Wycliff, Melancthon, and other religious reformers, no doubt, in fighting for freedom, gave an impetus to thought. But, unfortunately, they lacked consistency. Having reached the pinnacle of freedom, they forgot the rugged path up which they had climbed. Having overcome the tyranny of their oppressors, they themselves persecuted those who desired to travel further on the road of progress. Hence civilisation was deprived of valuable service through the influence of theology on the minds of men who commenced fighting the battle of freedom, but who ultimately yielded to the dictates of a limited and an exclusive faith.

The Rev. George Armstrong once said of the Church of England, and the same statement is equally applicable to some other Protestant sects : " I am allowed the right of private judgment on condition that I arrive at the opinions settled beforehand for me by the Church." And he remarks : " If I deny the right of private judgment, the Church calls me a Romanist ; if I acknowledge it and act upon it, she brands me as a heretic." Such inconsistency as this is foreign to the genius of Freethought. Unless a person's right to think at all is denied, he must be permitted the full right to arrive at any conclusions which may seem to him rational. Every man has a right to his views, even though he stand alone in their advocacy. This truth was forcibly put by the late John Stuart Mill, in his work "*On Liberty*," when he said : " If all mankind, minus one, were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind." Again : " The peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is, that it is robbing the human race ; posterity as well as the existing generation ; those who dissent from the opinion still more than those who hold it. If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth ; if wrong, they lose—what is almost as great a benefit—the clear perception or livelier impression of truth produced by its collision with error."

Infallibility alone can possess the right to suppress any opinion, because only infallibility can declare for certain that an opinion is necessarily an error ; and as, of course, infallibility does not exist, such right is not to be found. A strong presumption that the opinion sought to be suppressed is an erroneous one will not be sufficient ; because, in the first place, strong presumption is not a proof, and, in the second place, very strong presumptions have existed in the past in favour of the falsity of certain opinions, which only a small minority held, but which

afterwards turned out to be true. To again quote Mr. Mill : " The opinion which it is attempted to suppress by authority may possibly be true. Those who desire to suppress it of course deny its truth ; but they are not infallible. They have no authority to decide the question for all mankind, and exclude every other person from the means of judging. To refuse a hearing to an opinion because they are sure it is false is to assume that *their* certainty is the same thing as *absolute* certainty. All silencing of discussion is an assumption of infallibility." Here is a masterly vindication of the right of personal thought ; and this same right, be it observed, also implies the right to disbelieve, which right cannot be set aside without giving up altogether the just claim of investigation, and to do this would be to place oneself in a state of childish imbecility. The Roman Catholic is a little more consistent—not much, however ; he denies the right of private judgment altogether, and yet, strangely enough, he always makes an appeal to it when seeking to make converts. If a man says, I believe in the Roman Catholic Church, and therefore I deny that you have any such right as that of private judgment, I ask at once, " Why are you a Roman Catholic ? " He will, no doubt, proceed forthwith to give his reasons, thereby admitting that he has exercised his own private judgment in the matter—the very thing which he refuses me the right to do. Is it not evident, therefore, that every individual is bound by the laws of his being to use his thinking powers to the utmost extent that opportunity offers, and to investigate to the fullest degree such views upon all subjects philosophical, social, moral, political, or religious as may be presented, and thus to secure as much truth as possible and to reject the rest as error ? There is, and can be, no fixed standard of belief for all men, unless the right of private judgment be entirely given up ; nor scarcely then, as a matter of fact, for the standard itself will have to be accepted or rejected according to evidence.

But to disbelieve is not only a right, it is also a duty ; for every man is under an obligation to deny and to do his best to destroy that which, after careful and deliberate examination, appears to him to be false. No doubt the orthodox believers fear the legitimate exercise of Freethought, simply because they are alarmed that their own views will not stand the test ; but this really ought to be evidence to them that there is something unsound somewhere in their connections. There is a fashion in these matters, as in the cut of a coat, and the great masses of society do not like to be out of the fashion. But fashion will seldom stand criticism. " There is more power," said an old writer, " in an ounce of custom than in a ton of argument." Now, this is just the state of things that requires to be changed. Moreover, few will admit that they are guided by it, which is a tacit admission that even they hold that it

cannot be defended. They profess to exercise their private judgments, to think and to investigate even when they are bound hard and fast in the chain of a despotic custom—which proves that they, too, recognise the right to differ, which is really the right of unbelief.

There can be no progress without unbelief, for disbelief in an old system must ever precede the introduction of a new one. Progress always implies change, and change is the outcome of disbelief in that which is old, and no longer able to serve the world, added, of course, to what is considered to be a new truth. Thus we find that those who oppose Scepticism are usually adverse to change of any kind ; their motto is, "The same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Among such persons their exists a deep-rooted prejudice against everything that is new, and this stubborn clinging to the teachings of the past has sapped the very vitals of progress and perpetuated errors and hypocrisy to an unknown extent.

" A robe of seeming truth and trust
Hid crafty observation ;
And secret hung with poisoned crust
The dirk of defamation ;
A mask that like the gorget showed
Dye varying as the pigeon ;
And for a mantle large and broad
He wrapped him in religion."

The man who changes his views and embraces a conviction contrary to that which he was known previously to hold is usually stigmatised by all sorts of offensive epithets among his fellow men, and often he is regarded as being a very dangerous character. Now, change—assuming that it is in the right direction—is always desirable, and such change must of necessity arise out of unbelief. No man can trace the progress of human thought and opinion from the crude and unformed ideas of the ancients, up to the brilliant discoveries and marvellous inventions of the present day, without feeling a thrill of joy run through his frame that his lot has been cast in these later times. First one erroneous notion and then another has been got rid of, until, although the old tree of error still stands, its branches are shrivelled, its trunk is decaying, and its root is loosening in the soil in which it stood so firmly rooted a few centuries ago. And every step in the world's advancement has been brought about by unbelief. This fact is fully demonstrated by Buckle in his "History of Civilisation." This eminent writer, after showing that until doubt began civilisation was impossible, and that the religious tolerance we now have has been forced from the clergy by the secular classes, states "that the act of doubting is the originator, or at all events the necessary antecedent, of all progress. Here we have that

scepticism, the very name of which is an abomination to the ignorant, because it disturbs their lazy and complacent minds ; because it troubles their cherished superstitions ; because it imposes on them the fatigue of inquiry ; and because it rouses even sluggish understandings to ask if things are as they are commonly supposed, and if all is really true which they from their childhood have been taught to believe. The more we examine this great principle of Scepticism, the more distinctly shall we see the immense part it has played in the progress of European civilisation.....It may be said that to Scepticism we owe that spirit of inquiry which, during the last two centuries, has gradually encroached on every possible subject ; has reformed every department of practical and speculative knowledge ; has weakened the authority of the privileged classes, and thus placed liberty on a surer foundation ; has chastised the despotism of princes ; has restrained the arrogance of the nobles, and has even diminished the prejudices of the clergy. In a word, it is this which has remedied the three fundamental errors of the olden time—errors which made the people, in politics too confiding, in science too credulous, in religion too intolerant."

Lecky, in his "History of European Morals," tells us that "nearly all the greatest intellectual achievements of the last three centuries have been preceded and prepared by the growth of Scepticism.....The splendid discoveries of physical science would have been impossible but for the scientific scepticisms of the school of Bacon.....Not till the education of Europe passed from the monasteries to the universities ; not till Mohammedan science and classical Freethought and industrial independence broke the sceptre of the Church, did the intellectual revival of Europe begin."

It is not necessary to dwell upon the great discoveries and profound thoughts which the mighty giants in intellect have given to the world both in our own age and in the ages which preceded it. These are known to every observant man and woman, and will certainly not be disputed even by the most ardent believer, the wildest enthusiast of *statu quo*, or the most dogmatic opponent of further change. The lesson of all history is that disbelief in the old has ever preceded the introduction of the new. Christianity itself came based upon the disbelief in Paganism, and the Pagans, feeling outraged at the proposed change, called the first Christians not only unbelievers, but even Atheists.

Martin Luther disbelieved in the mysteries and mummeries of Roman Catholicism, and the result was what is called the Protestant Reformation. Copernicus and Galileo disbelieved in the Bible cosmogony, with its theory of the heavens ; and this Scepticism gave birth to correct views upon the great science of astronomy. Modern geologists reject the Bible story of Creation, and the consequence is more faith

in Nature's records than the absurdities of the Christian Bible. In philosophy the same thing has occurred over and over again, as also in the political world. The beneficial results which arose from disbelief among the people were prominent during the three centuries prior to the present one. It was at this period that the people began to think for themselves. Previous to the sixteenth century Scepticism was chiefly confined to the few; while the many were content to accept, with implicit belief, whatever the priests taught them. At last, however, Scepticism inspired the masses to inaugurate a conflict against authority and in vindication of mental and individual liberty. Thus unbelief has ever been the herald of change and improvement, while its enemy has always been that superstitious conservatism that eschews all advancement, frowns down every new discovery, taboos all change, and keeps its anchor firmly fixed in the errors of the past. With such persons mildew is more sacred than sunshine, and decay than the opening violet shedding its fragrance in the morning air.

"What makes fanatics in a State?
What shields the wasteful tyrant's throne?
What fills the preacher's purse and plate?
What gives deceit its specious tones?
What makes the senseless millions slaves?
What forged the chains of man's condition?
What spreads dread terror round men's graves?
What fools the mind? Base superstition."

CHARLES WATTS.

NOTES AND SCRAPS.

Nos. 1 to 6 of THE AGNOSTIC are now published in volume form. The book has a neat and striking appearance, and we trust that it may be of service in establishing a more correct conception of Agnosticism and in winning recruits to our ranks. The price of the volume is 4s. 6d.

We have had our attention directed to a clever and noteworthy novel, entitled "We Two," by Edna Lyall. The hero is a Secularist leader, and the whole story, conceived in a most liberal spirit, is of particular interest to advanced thinkers. Next month we shall insert a brief review of the volume, from the pen of a new and gifted contributor.

We much regret that we cannot report any satisfactory improvement in the health of our esteemed *confrère*, "G. M. McC." He has been compelled to relinquish for a while his literary labours.

In our current issue we publish the opening pages of a paper entitled "The Philosophy of Epicurus and Modern Agnosticism," read by Dr. Knighton before the members of the Royal Society of Literature, of which the learned Doctor is a Vice-President. Dr. Knighton's argument in favour of his contention that Agnosticism is the philosophy of Epicurus in a modern dress might occasionally be taken exception to; but the tone of his paper is throughout thoughtful and sympathetic, and we feel indebted to him for his valuable contribution to our magazine. We may add that Dr. Knighton is anxious that his paper should be considered and discussed, and that we, on our part, shall be gratified to find space for any criticism of his views with which we may be favoured.

The first number of a new magazine, *The Eye: A Journal of Observations*, is interesting reading, and should hit the public taste. The contents are of a varied character—interesting, instructive, and amusing. The Ethics division is an admirable feature, and should prove attractive to thoughtful readers. The new magazine has our best wishes, and we commend it to the notice of our subscribers.

All communications should be addressed—EDITOR of THE AGNOSTIC, 17, Johnson Court, Fleet Street, London.

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"I think that generally (and more and more as I grow older), but not always, an Agnostic would be the more correct description of my state of mind."—CHARLES DARWIN.

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THE AGNOSTIC.

SEPTEMBER, 1885.

THE THRALDOM OF ETHICS.

OF the educated people who still sometimes go to church, and there smile or sleep under the preacher's drawling, there can be hardly one who troubles himself at all about the doctrinal or controversial parts of the discourse. To such listeners the desiccated dogmas are simply a weariness, the clumsy thrusts at science—the ponderous irrelevancies meant for triumphant refutations of Spencer or Darwin—are matter of mere tolerant pity and contempt. They know, these men, that in science no good thing can come out of Nazareth; and for teaching in astronomy, in geology, or in the science of life, they would as soon think of going to the tap-room of the village ale-house as to the church. But when the preacher leaves polemics for morality, and tells his congregation what each of them should do, or refrain from doing—when he talks of justice and charity and the duty of man to his neighbour, then our languid listener grows alert. His cold tolerance is thawed into sympathy, he is stirred and steadied to attention as by one who, after long rambling, has at last come to the point; and with a return of complacency he says to himself: There, now, that is what I call religion—that is the preacher's proper theme. It is this ethical *envoi*, this fag-end of personal application, that brings him to church at all, or, at least, that justifies to his own conscience his occasional conformity to English Sunday etiquette. He thinks that, however little religion may have to do with science, it has much to do with duty; he holds with Matthew Arnold that the Church is a society for the promotion of goodness; and, while not admitting any monopoly in that body, or thinking its dicta infallible, he is quite content to leave the teaching of morality entirely in its hands.

For such an attitude, however little warrant it may have, there is, at any rate, a good excuse. The law of property by prescription has its

basis in psychology as well as its convenience in practice, for where there has been immemorial possession the idea of bad title can with difficulty be framed. It is so hard to see how that which has never been otherwise can yet always have been wrong. And, certainly, if the plea of prescription were worth anything outside a law-court, it would avail religion here. There has been no recorded time in which the Church has not, almost without claim and as a thing indisputable, borne rule over the conscience and the conduct of men. On those rare and salient peaks, indeed, where thought becomes speculative, and private behaviour is sublimed into public action—on those the supremacy of religion has been questioned, and from them her ministers have been dislodged. But on the great flat of commonplace, whereon nine-tenths of life are passed, there has been no uprising against the Churches' rule. Religious government there may have been lax and often evaded; there may have been abundant lawlessness; but there has been no revolt. So ancient, indeed, and so tranquil is this subjection of ethics that the very word religion, both etymologically and by popular use, denotes rather a straitened course of conduct than a habit of adoration or of awe.

To know whether such a subordination of conduct to religion is defensible, we have only to remember what are ethics and what is the nature of religion. Now, every ethical question is entirely a question of relations: when we have determined in what relations men shall stand to one another we have determined what their conduct shall be, and it is with the laws of human conduct that ethics have to do. But all relations without exception are the subject-matter of science, and of science alone. And the questions, What shall I do to my fellow-man? and What shall I refrain from doing? are questions as undeniably scientific as the problem of the three bodies, or that of the maintenance of organic life. Each one of these problems has to do with the laws of interaction of the units forming a given aggregate, and it matters not whether the aggregate be one of organisms, of planets, or of cells. There are few thinking men now-a-days who do not recognise this in the two last instances—who do not see that any dictum of religion on an astro-nomic or a geologic question is quite worthless and impertinent. There are many, too, who can see that some of the more conspicuous social laws are in no way confirmed by religious sanction, and not the least weakened by a dogma to which they may be adverse. Free Trade is believed in without any religious aid, and it would not be in the least discredited though some Fair Trading fanatic were to draw from Paul or Ezekiel an argument for countervailing duties on the sugar of France. But if religion is to have no concern with the ruling of international exchange, what other social relation is there in which it should be suffered

to interfere? The most elementary precepts of morality—the commandments, Thou shalt not murder, and Thou shalt not steal—can have utterly no virtue, save in so far as they are founded on the appropriate science—on a clear perception, that is, of the laws of social life. Indeed, it has only to be said that ethics are a science in order to show that in the regulation of human conduct religion can have absolutely no part. Religion has to do with the Unknowable alone: how, then, can it pronounce on what is within the scope of our knowledge? It has concern only with the Absolute: how, then, can it tell us aught of that relative or of this? Its domain is one of contradictories that are irreconcilable, and of vague conceptions that escape all grasp: how, then, can it predicate, or speak even articulately, seeing that what it contemplates is the ineffable. To answer that religion has all along spoken definitely proves nothing, save that it has hardly ever spoken true. To say that the Church has been the immemorial teacher of morality is simply to affirm that to its seizure of all other sciences religion has added the usurpation of ethics. There was a time when astronomy was under the religious yoke; there was a time, still later, when geology was in the same subjection. Biology is but now emancipated, and sociology still struggles to be free. And the thralldom of ethics has been the most ancient, the most profound, and will be the last in dissolution, only because, of all sciences, the science of human conduct is the most perplexed.

What, then, some may ask us, is to be left of religion, after all science has been released from its control? Nothing, we answer, but an *Oh Altitudo*—nothing but the privilege of poetry and music to call up thoughts that transcend all the straitened forms of proposition. To proclaim the omnipresence of the Unknowable, to breathe round the tangible world of science that invisible ether of mystery which gives to every landscape its loveliness and to every creature its life—this is the one office of religion; this will be the mission of the true and holy Church. In that temple there shall be no traffickers nor money-changers in the outer cloisters—no idols in the inner shrine; and the curious stranger, when he penetrates into the sanctuary and draws aside the veil, shall find nothing—nothing but the Shekinah of cosmic mystery, indefinable to his vision, impalpable to his grasp.

ROBERT AITKEN.

HERBERT SPENCER'S PHILOSOPHY: AN EXPOSITION.

IX.

"FIRST PRINCIPLES."

EVOLUTION: WHAT IS IT?

BEFORE proceeding to the discussion of the vast subject of *Evolution* we must pause awhile in order to take a re-survey of the ground over which we have already travelled.

Agnosticism, as defined in Article VI., is completely-unified knowledge of the manifestations of the Unknowable. Keeping in view this definition, we have now to inquire how far the results at which we have arrived go towards unifying these manifestations. The propositions established and exemplified in the two papers immediately preceding this are (1) the indestructibility of Matter, (2) the continuity of Motion, (3) the persistence of Force, (4) the persistence of relations among forces, (5) transformation and equivalence of forces, and (6) the rhythm of Motion. Each of these propositions transcends the class-limits of the sciences, and so forms a universal truth. The indestructibility of Matter, or the continuity of Motion, or the persistence of Force, belongs, not to one science only, but to all sciences. It is not a truth in Chemistry merely, nor in Mechanics merely, nor in Physics merely; but it is a truth holding throughout the whole range of the sciences. Similarly, the persistence of relations among forces, the transformation and equivalence of forces, and the rhythm of Motion are truths of a very high degree of generality. They belong no more to Astronomy than to Biology, no more to Biology than to Psychology, and no more to Psychology than to Sociology; but they are truths common alike to all orders of phenomena. And so we see that these truths tend to unify the manifestations of the Unknowable. "They are truths which unify concrete phenomena belonging to all divisions of Nature." They are, therefore, parts of that all-embracing synthesis which constitutes Agnosticism.

It is clear, however, that these truths, whether considered separately or in their *ensemble*, do not present a complete conception of the Cosmos—

that is, the sum-total of the manifestations of the Unknowable. Something more is required to make up that synthesis of thought which the Agnostic Philosophy submits as an interpretation of the synthesis of things. Having ascertained the laws of the factors, it is now necessary to ascertain the laws of their co-operation. Having discovered how some factor—say Force—works by itself, we have next to discover how all the factors work together and what is their joint result. Having seen that each of the factors works in conformity to Law, we have to inquire whether their co-operation works in conformity to Law. Having learnt one by one that Matter is indestructible, Motion continuous, Force persistent—that forces are ever transforming, and that Motion is ever rhythmic, we have still to frame a formula that should express the combined result of the interworkings of these factors.

What, then, must be the nature of such a formula? "It must be one that specifies the course of the changes undergone by both the Matter and the Motion. Every transformation implies re-arrangement of component parts; and a definition of it, while saying what has happened to the sensible or insensible portions of substance concerned, must say also what has happened to the movements, sensible or insensible, which the re-arrangement of parts implies. Further, unless the transformation always goes on in the same way and at the same rate, the formula must specify the conditions under which it commences, ceases, and is reversed."

"The law we seek, therefore, must be the law of *the continuous re-distribution of Matter and Motion*. Absolute rest and permanence do not exist. Every object, no less than the aggregate of all objects, undergoes, from instant to instant, some alteration of state. Gradually, or quickly, it is receiving motion or losing motion, while some or all of its parts are simultaneously changing their relations to one another. And the question to be answered is, What dynamic principle, true of the metamorphosis as a whole and in its details, expresses these ever-changing relations?"

This dynamic principle is what we call Evolution. But what is Evolution? Let us see.

Suppose that some distinguished literary man in England writes a history of General Grant. As far as the work goes it is a model biography. Nothing is omitted that should be inserted, and nothing inserted that should be omitted. Every fact is recorded fully, but not tediously. No primary event takes a secondary place, and no secondary event a primary place. But there is one fault, and only one, to be found with the life. The first occurrence mentioned happens five years after the General's birth, and the last occurrence five years before his death. So

that the story is incomplete, since there remain ten years of his knowable existence undescribed and unexplained. In order to be complete the book should begin with the birth and finish with the death of its hero. That is to say, it should include Grant's appearance out of the imperceptible and his disappearance into the imperceptible. It is clear however, that, as the matter forming his physique could not before birth have been non-existent, he must have had a pre-natal history. It is equally clear that, as this matter could not after death become non-existent, he must have a post-mortem history. "These preceding and succeeding existences, under sensible forms, are possible objects of knowledge; and knowledge has obviously not reached its limits until it has united the past, present, and future histories into a whole.

Knowing any man personally implies having before seen him under a shape much the same as his present shape; and knowing him simply as a man implies the inferred antecedent states of infancy, childhood, and youth. Though the man's future is not known specifically, it is known generally: the facts that he will die and that his body will decay are facts which complete in outline the changes to be hereafter gone through by him.

To the biography of the individual man Science adds an intra-uterine biography, beginning with him as a microscopic germ; and it follows out his ultimate changes until it finds his body resolved into the gaseous products of decomposition."

With changed terms what applies to a unit applies also to any number of units—to a family, to a community, to the whole human race.

What applies to man applies to the lower animals. The biography of a baboon, like the biography of a king, has to state the creature's progress from the insensible to the sensible, and, again, from the sensible to the insensible.

And what applies to organic nature applies to inorganic nature. Whether it be a history of any single object, or of the whole universe, that history is incomplete as long as it either commences or finishes with the concrete. A complete account of the paper on which *THE AGNOSTIC* is printed has to say not only what the paper is now, but also what it was before it began to be paper, and what it will be after it has ceased to be paper. And of every other thing a story broken off at neither end has to tell the antecedent and the subsequent state, as well as the present state.

We gather, then, that the past and the future of every object come legitimately within the bounds of possible knowledge. Since mental progress is made up almost wholly of our increasing knowledge of the past and this future, it is manifest that we cannot have reached the limits of knowledge until we can in some form express the whole past and the whole future of every single object, and of the aggregate of objects. "We are fully possessed of the conviction that, setting out

abruptly as we do with some substance which already had a concrete form, our history is incomplete: the thing had a history preceding the state with which we started. Hence our Theory of Things, considered individually or in their totality, is confessedly imperfect so long as any past or future portions of their sensible existences are unaccounted for.

The change from a diffused, imperceptible state, to a concentrated, perceptible state, is an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion; and the change from a concentrated, perceptible state, to a diffused, imperceptible state, is an absorption of motion and concomitant disintegration of matter. These are truisms. Constituent parts cannot aggregate without losing some of their relative motion; and they cannot separate without more relative motion being given to them.

When taken together, the two opposite processes thus formulated constitute the history of every sensible existence, under its simplest form. Loss of motion and consequent integration, eventually followed by gain of motion and consequent disintegration—see here a statement comprehensive of the entire series of changes passed through: comprehensive in an extremely general way, as any statement which holds of sensible existence at large must be; but still comprehensive in the sense that all the changes gone through fall within it.

Here we have to note the further all-important fact that every change undergone by every sensible existence is a change in one or other of these two opposite directions. Apparently an aggregate which has passed out of an originally discrete state into a concrete state, thereafter remains for an indefinite period without undergoing further integration, and without beginning to disintegrate. But this is not true. All things are growing or decaying, accumulating matter or wearing away, integrating or disintegrating. All things are varying in their temperatures, contracting or expanding, integrating or disintegrating. Both the quantity of matter contained in an aggregate and the quantity of motion contained in it increase or decrease; and increase or decrease of either is an advance towards greater diffusion or greater concentration. Continued losses or gains of substance, however slow, imply ultimate disappearance or indefinite enlargement; and losses or gains of the insensible motion we call heat will, if continued, produce complete integration or complete disintegration. The sun's rays falling on a cold mass, augmenting the molecular motion throughout it, and causing it to occupy more space, are beginning a process which, if carried far, will disintegrate the mass into liquid, and, if carried farther, will disintegrate it into gas; and the diminution of bulk which a volume of gas undergoes as it parts with some of its molecular motion is a diminution which, if the loss of molecular motion proceeds, will presently be followed by liquefaction, and eventually by solidification. And

since there is no such thing as an absolutely constant temperature, the necessary inference is that every aggregate is at every moment progressing towards either concentration or greater diffusion. Every-where and to the last, therefore, the change at any moment going on forms a part of one or other of the two processes. While the general history of every aggregate is definable as a change from a diffused, imperceptible state to a concentrated, perceptible state, and again to a diffused imperceptible state, every detail of the history is definable as a part of either the one change or the other. This, then, must be the universal law of redistribution of matter and motion, which serves at once to unify the seemingly diverse groups of changes, as well as the entire course of each group."

Now we may answer our initial question—What is Evolution? *Evolution is the integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion.* In direct antagonism to the process of Evolution is the process of Dissolution. Dissolution means the absorption of motion and concomitant disintegration of matter.

To some persons—to those who are accustomed to the common conception of Evolution—the foregoing formula will appear startling, if not utterly bewildering. The vulgar notion, that Evolution is the passage of the quadruped into the biped—that Evolution begins with a monkey and ends with a man, seems beneath notice—beneath contempt. Yet this notion is vaguely held by a considerable majority of the general public, and by nine-tenths of those who assail Evolution from behind the altar. That Evolution is concerned with the development of the human race, whether from some lower tribe of mammalia or from forms lower still, is quite true. But, as we shall see next month, this is merely an infinitesimal part of the great work of Evolution.

IGNOTUS.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF EPICURUS AND MODERN

AGNOSTICISM.*

(Continued from last month.)

As to the soul of man, it will be easily understood that, as Epicurus taught the gods to be simply formed of material atoms, he would not be likely to assign any more exalted origin or formation to the spirit within us. All our good or evil, he insisted, is simply in this life. He acknowledged that there was something very noble and captivating about Plato's ideas relative to the soul and immortality. But all this is poetry, not philosophy. Plato drew his pictures from the imagination, not from reason. Everything ends in its opposite, argued Plato—light in darkness, darkness in light, life in death, and death in life. Such reasoning, argued Epicurus, is the dream of fancy; analogies of this kind being most misleading, and quite incapable of philosophical proof.

The Abbé Batteux is particularly severe on Epicurus for this denial of immortality to man. "Of what avail is it," he asks, "that Cicero and Seneca praise the Epicureans as being upright, full of probity, and loving towards each other? Of what avail that Volaterra, Quevedo, and Gassendi have written in their behalf, when they stand self-condemned as deniers of that which gives its charm to life, and without which there is no foundation for morality or rectitude? Take away the hopes of the future, and what becomes of true virtue? How are the injustice and misery of this life to be set right? How are the virtuous and the self-denying to be rewarded, and the wicked prosperous ones to be punished?" How, indeed, may we not ask with Batteux? Gassendi's reply, by anticipation, was that Epicurus was not responsible for the results, but only for the truth, of his teaching.

Epicurus taught that in infinite space there were infinite numbers of atoms, of which the movement in space, during infinite ages, was the cause of the production of worlds and beings. Man was the result of a fortuitous combination of these atoms, and at his death would be

* A paper read before the Royal Society of Literature on June 24th, 1885; Sir Patrick de Colquhoun, Q.C., in the Chair.

resolved into atoms again. The world is so constituted that man cannot be happy without being wise and honest and just ; and wisdom, honesty, and justice will generally ensure happiness, but not always. We must take the world as we find it. Man's duty, therefore, according to Epicurus, was to enjoy all that could be enjoyed in this life, and, as age crept on, gradually to detach himself from it. He certainly commended virtue, and looked upon it as a good thing. His own practice was one of kindly benevolence, as proved by his dying letter to Hermarchus, and by his Will ; and he did what he could to emancipate man from slavish fears and the terrors of ignorance. But the Romans banished Alcibiades and Philiscus, Epicurean teachers, Athenæus informs us, because the authorities thought their teaching was contrary to morality and religion. True ; but this does not prove that Epicurus himself was a corrupter of youth. Socrates was put to death at Athens because his teaching was declared by the authorities to be contrary to religion and morality ; and King Antiochus banished all philosophers from his dominions because the priests advised him so to do, nor would the Spartans admit any in their city. In all false religions the priests obtained as much power as possible over weak minds by picturing the future as terrible. Thus they secured to themselves power, wealth, and political influence. Any man who sought to emancipate his fellow-men from their tyranny was looked upon as an enemy. Epicurus sought to do this. It is in these aspects of his teaching that I see a striking similarity between the philosophy of Epicurus and modern Agnosticism. All that can be said for and against that philosophy on moral grounds has been said before this over and over again. If it were not for its parallelism with the teaching of the Agnostics of the present day, I should not have been justified in bringing the subject before you.

Epicurus endeavoured to put upon human affairs a somewhat less cheerless and lugubrious aspect than the philosophical teachers of his time delighted in displaying and expounding. He recognised, above and beyond all that is known, and all that the human mind is ever likely to know, a boundless unknown, on which the imagination may play, and in which poetry will find an adequate field for its creative powers ; and this, if I understand the matter at all, is precisely the teaching of our modern Agnostics. Entering on the known and the knowable, he thought he found in the atomic theory a sufficient explanation of the material frame of the universe, and anything beyond that he would not recognise. Anything beyond that he relegated to the domain of poetry. The resplendent phenomena of the starry universe, vast and distant, the stars themselves separated from each other and from our solar system by immeasurable distances, he conceived were all brought into harmony by his combinations of atoms, just as he looked

upon the organisms on the earth's surface, wonderful and various as they are, as simply exemplifications of the truth of his favourite molecular and atomic principles. Among these organisms he discovered some so delicately strung that they were susceptible of pleasure and pain, and others, with still more complex organisations, capable of distinguishing right from wrong. To all he gave the same explanation—they were all combinations of atoms, put together in different ways ; but he would recognise nothing nobler in the one than in the other. His Materialistic philosophy satisfied him, as it satisfies so many scientific philosophers of the present day ; and these are among our modern Agnostics. But, further still, he found some beings on the earth endued with faculties of reasoning and judging, who, by much creeping about on our little planet, and by much study of others' thoughts, and by much reflection on their own part, had come to the conclusion that the author of all things, the creator of the world, the ruler of the universe, is wise and good and powerful—ininitely wise, infinitely good, and infinitely powerful. He could not find any proofs that this being interfered at all in human affairs, and so he denied the fact altogether. Moreover, he found that other sages argued that these words, "wise, good, and powerful," denoted merely human notions, and ought not to be applied at all to super-human beings, entirely unlike ourselves. And with these latter Epicurus agreed. In his letter to Meneceus he presents the two pictures—one of those sages who represent the Deity in such a way as to appeal to our feelings, to produce emotions of love, awe, reverence, worship, and self-consecration, and devotion ; and the other of those who deny the Deity and his attributes, but urge the cultivation of our faculties of observation, reflection, calculation, and inference, instead of awe, reverence, and worship. With these latter he agrees, remarking that there is no reason why we should quarrel about it. Our faculties, he argues, are so constituted that we cannot all receive the same ideas as truths. Indeed, of absolute truth we know nothing, only of relative—that which may be truth to us for the time being, and in harmony with our present surroundings.

We are groping in this life, argue both Epicurus and the Agnostics, in the midst of profound shadows, if not of darkness. That reason, of which men boast so much, is but a spark which dazzles our eyes for a moment, and then leaves us in greater darkness than before. All is mystery in nature, *sacer est mundus*. We cannot discover the primary causes of things, but only the secondary.

Of the four letters of Epicurus preserved for us by Diogenes Laertius, one treats of physical philosophy, one of the spiritual world, one of morals, and the fourth of law generally. The great object of all his philosophy, says Torquatus, as quoted by Cicero ("De Fin.," 119),

was to deliver us from superstition, from the fear of death, and from that dread of natural laws and natural phenomena which is the result of ignorance. "When we are filled with fear on account of vulgar errors instilled into us in youth," said Epicurus, in his eleventh Maxim, "we can deliver ourselves only by the study of nature." And modern Agnosticism teaches us the same lesson.

If we miss the serene atmosphere of calmer and more poetic forms of art in the teaching of Epicurus, it is something to know that he impresses upon us the fact, and makes us feel that our little life is rounded with a sleep, a mystery of eternity behind and another mystery of eternity before ; that history is like a short space lighted up by a flickering taper in the midst of infinite gloom and mystery, and its greatest events only brief scenes in a vast drama of conflicting forces, where the actors pass in rapid succession, stars silent rolling over us, graves under us silent—events rising from the all-embracing darkness, and actors vanishing into it. Since the beginning of ethical theorising thinkers of various schools had tried in one way or other to deduce virtue from truth, and to identify vice with error. To Epicurus, the metaphysical method, employed by so many of his predecessors and contemporaries in Athens, appeared to be a mere formal logic-chopping, where the essence of the teaching escaped amid barren demonstrations of verbal identities and inanities. In this, too, the modern Agnostics agree with him.

Recognising the existence of evil, both physical and moral, in the world, as an undoubted fact, he could not reconcile it with Plato's ideas of a Supreme Being, infinitely powerful and infinitely good. At the same time, he reverently admits that a race of beings who knew nothing of the distinction between right and wrong, truth and falsehood, pleasure and pain, would be an insensate and altogether stupid race. Having these perceptions finally, he would have us do what we can to remove evil, to promote truth and prosperity, and to increase man's enjoyment. All this is summed up in his idea of "pleasure."

In our absorbing longing to know and to understand, the Agnostics would have us altogether renounce faith. What is the world in which we live? what are we who live in it? These are the questions they would have us to study. Of other worlds and of other beings they know nothing and care nothing. Let us first understand, say they, what is around and about us, and what is our own nature and destiny. The time has gone by when we can be answered, as the young lady was by her fashionable teacher, when she wanted to know something of the process of digestion : "It's not for you, Belinda, to know anything about your inside ; it can't do you any good ; and, besides, it's rude." And so it was with the teaching of our philosopher. Let us give all our atten-

tion, our whole strength, he urged, to learn what is around and about us, what we are here to do, and how we are to do it, so as to secure our own well-being, which he called pleasure. Let us study the laws which regulate the material world in which we live, for of any other we know nothing. Let us endeavour to comprehend the realities of life around us, and to free ourselves from the clouds of mysticism and the masks of hypocrisy and superstition.

A few examples taken from the teaching of Epicurus will make plain the striking similarity between his teaching and that of the modern Agnostics, on which I insist. "That man whom they accuse of having been devoted to pleasure," says Cicero (*"De Fin.,"* i. 18), "I mean Epicurus, did not cease to maintain that it was impossible to live pleasantly or happily without being prudent, honest, and just."

A disciple comes to Epicurus, and says to him : "I am devoted to your school, but I am miserable : cure me : they say you teach the art of being happy." "Truly, my friend," replies the philosopher, "if your malady is of the body, go to a physician ; if it is of the mind, explain it to me." "It is my mind that torments me," replies the disciple ; "I cannot get what I desire, either wealth, or honour, or the esteem of others, and I am miserable in consequence." "Your condition is a very sad one," was the reply. "Every evil is a misfortune, every pleasure is a good ; but we must not purchase our pleasure at too high a price : if we do, we deprive ourselves of greater pleasures. If we have no prudence, we cannot be happy. We must enjoy the pleasure within our reach that does not entail future evil. We must banish from us what is evil—such as inordinate desires of wealth, honour, and such like. We must willingly embrace any pain or sorrow that will deliver us from a greater pain or sorrow hereafter. This is the balance which philosophy holds up to reason. You must weigh your own interests in it, and discover thus the rule for your future conduct. Remove the cause of your suffering by banishing your extravagant desires ; be content with the simple pleasures which fortune allows you to enjoy ; see what they are and enjoy them ; and, if not happy, you will at first be free from much of your pain, and ultimately attain to contentment, and perhaps to happiness" (Epicuri, *"Opera Omnia,"* edited by the Abbé Batteux, art. v., p. 101). The disciple complied with the teacher's advice, and soon became a happy man.

"Nature has not given us the loins of a bull, or the neck of a camel, or the stomach of an ostrich," said Epicurus. "We must accept our physical nature, such as it is, with all its limitations and imperfections. To fret ourselves about these imperfections or limitations would be foolish and absurd. And equally absurd and foolish is it for us to fret or distress ourselves about our position in life, our mental constitution,

our surroundings, and our lot. All these things are as independent of us as our physical structure. All is arranged for us by an unalterable fate, which is really the outcome of the laws of the universe acting on us, and utterly irrespective of our will. We may make use of our common sense, our intellect, and our judgment, to improve our position, and thus to secure more pleasure for ourselves ; but to grieve over our lot in life, unless it is the result of our own vice or folly, is by no means the part of wisdom."

"Death is not a thing that a wise man will grieve over," wrote Epicurus in his letter to Meneceus ; "for death in itself is nothing, and does nothing to us. The particles of our body are constantly changing, sometimes more slowly, sometimes more quickly. We do not grieve over this change, neither will the wise man grieve over the prospect of death ; for, as long as we consciously exist, death is not with us, and when it comes we are no more, and perceive it not. The atoms feel not, and death releases them from their connection with us, and from our consciousness of them." Death was, then, to him and to his disciples, an eternal sleep and insensibility.

WILLIAM KNIGHTON, LL.D.

(To be concluded next month.)

IS AGNOSTICISM A FORM OF MORAL COWARDICE?

MANY of both its Theistic enemies and Atheistic censors join in a strenuous attempt to fix the odium of moral cowardice upon the profession of Agnosticism. They insist that the title Agnostic is assumed only by persons who have neither the honesty to avow, nor the courage to maintain, their real opinions upon speculative questions, and who are actuated by the dishonourable purpose of ensuring exemption from that public obloquy, and those more severe and mortifying private and social defections and proscriptions, which follow a bold confession of unpopular ideas. This indictment is furnished with reasons as numerous and excellent as reasons for slander usually are. The main cause of accusation is derived from the assertion that there is no essential, or even specious, point of difference between Atheism and Agnosticism—that, indeed, the one is an exact counterpart of the other, so that any distinctions that appear to divide them are purely arbitrary. Hence it is obvious, according to these critics, that Agnosticism is, after all, only a modern version of Atheism, expurgated and embellished to please the delicate and fastidious tastes of the time.

Divesting the impeachment of the accessories of travesty by which it is beset, we find the residual imputation so serious a reflection upon that sense of honour—or, as it is better called, self-respect—which every man worthy of the name ought most uncompromisingly to defend from invasion, that we are constrained to examine it at some length.

Have Agnostics, in adopting that title, any philosophic ground for doing so, or are they merely actuated by motives of sinister interest, which warn them to avoid the resentment and reprisals of orthodox authority, and suggest as a safeguard the assumption of a name unintelligible to the great mass of the people, under cover of which obnoxious opinions may be retained with impunity?

The best answer to such strictures as the foregoing emerges without much importunity from a comparison of the different aspects of Atheism and Agnosticism. Those who institute this comparison invariably fall into the gross mistake of limiting it to one point—that of the existence of the Deity. Now, it is precisely here, and here only, that Atheism and Agnosticism at all coalesce; in every other respect

they are quite divided. To the Agnostic, as to the Atheist, the question of the presence of a Personal God, in or outside of the Cosmos, is one in reference to which, Reason being silent, judgment must be suspended: all the evidences hitherto adduced one way or another are so vague and conflicting as to prevent the formation of any logical conclusion. To assert that God is involves an assumption for which there is no vestige of support; to deny that he exists is an equally wild and monstrous proposition. Without the means to judge, we must refrain from formularising, and learn candour in place of subterfuge.

The principal issues between Atheism and Agnosticism have relation to the nature of the universe, and in this connection the two systems of philosophy are mutually exclusive in their teachings. Atheism is a doctrine of the universe; Agnosticism is an embodied disclaimer of all predication upon that subject. The phrase, "doctrine of the universe," here employed to define the function of Atheism, is one expressly selected and sanctioned by one of the most eminent and authoritative of living Atheists, so that all risk of misrepresentation is thus obviated. What are the terms of this "doctrine of the universe"?

Modern scientific research of the most vigorous and exhaustive kind has forever dispelled the illusion fostered by the senses to the effect that matter perishes, forms pass, the substance is changeless. The solid that seems to melt away into nothingness has, in reality, only entered on another phase of being. The several elements that, drawn and held together by chemical affinity, constituted a solid body have formed new connections, and exist, either singly or in combination, as gases or fluids. No particle of matter is lost or changed: constant amid all flux, fixed amid all commotion, it increases not, and diminishes not, but remains evermore the same in quantity and property. So of force, its various modes may be converted into each other; electricity into magnetism, and conversely; gravitation into heat, and so on; but the sum of energy is inviolably persistent; matter and force are the fundamental cosmic constants, the only permanent elements in the constitution of things. They can neither be traced to a source of origin, nor imagined to have a future cessation. Accordingly, their non-existence being inconceivable, they must have an absolute and eternal nature. Thus it is certain that the universe, as regards the substance—of which its phenomena are only fleeting expressions—never began, and can never cease to be. The reasoning process here pursued seems so logically consistent that even discerning minds are often either embarrassed or subjugated by it. As to the facts with which the argument starts, there can be no controversy—they are part of the established order of science; but the case is widely different when we are confronted by the inferences from those facts which, it is alleged, are

legitimately deducible from them. Given the indestructibility of matter and the conservation of energy to prove that matter and force are infinite and eternal—that is the problem in its simplest form—it is easy to assert that these two facts of existence afford a wide and stable enough basis for the superimposed corollary; but how to prove it, that is the supreme difficulty. All that can possibly be implied in the scientific doctrine as to the indestructibility of matter is that, under prevailing conditions, it cannot be annihilated; but this holds good as far, and no farther, than those conditions extend; and by what right of experience or reason does any man take it upon himself to maintain that the system of nature, as it is revealed to us, has, with such inconsiderable variations as are recorded by science, always remained, or is likely to continue, undeflectingly the same? There is no more natural or necessary connection between the concrete dictum that matter is indestructible, or that force is perpetual, and the proposition that matter and force are eternal, than—to use an illustration once introduced with some effect by a distinguished debater in a speech against Spiritualism—there is between the statement that a waggon of turnips costs 5s. 3d., and that, therefore, a cart of cabbages must cost 4s. 6¾d. Atheism is not much more in conformity with reason than Theism. Professing to disown anything of the nature of assumption, and avoiding an unwavering allegiance to truth, the Atheistic thinker yet, by what is almost certainly an unconscious self-delusion, imports into his conceptions the most vagrant and obscure elements, which he too fondly and indulgently regards as paragons of orderliness and perspicuity. Thus, as we see daily, men boasting and rejoicing in their elevation to Reason—by which, to speak plainly, they are apt to do her much disservice—are among the first to prejudice, or even betray, her cause in a critical conjuncture. The Agnostic has, therefore, no choice left but that of setting himself right, if not with the world, which is no great matter, at least with his own conscience, although his detractors often deny him even that modest luxury, by assuming a distinctive title which shall more adequately and fittingly define his true position. Than the term Agnostic no better can be found. It is eloquently expressive of the condition of mind to which the persons it denominates have attained concerning all transcendental conjectures. Is there a God? Theist: “Yes.” Atheist and Agnostic: “We do not know.” Is the universe infinite and eternal? Theist: “No.” Atheist: “Yes.” Agnostic: “I do not know.” Is matter the cause of all phenomena? Theist: “No.” Atheist: “Yes.” Agnostic: “I do not know.” Is there another and a higher life beyond this present sphere? Theist: “Yes.” Atheist: “No.” Agnostic: “I cannot tell.” The difference between Atheism and Agnosticism is the difference between open disbelief and

judgment in abeyance—between categorical statement and absolute silence. If a man has no right to let himself be known by the style of address which is most nearly representative of his philosophical views, then there is an end of all right, and we must submit to have ourselves labelled in accordance with the ideas of the ruling powers for the time being. If one is to incur the odium of weakness because he prefers to disclose what he is rather than what he is not, we shall have an even more generous harvest of hypocrisy in the years to come than we have reaped by our fanatical folly in the time that is past. As for the taunt that the term Agnosticism is deliberately chosen on account of its protective value—in other words, because of its euphemy and mysteriousness, which confer upon its professors a reputation for wisdom and a delightful immunity from the discomforts and losses of unpopularity—it is enough to point to the history of Agnostic action, than which no more effective retort can well be imagined. If the common people do not understand what Agnosticism means by this time, it is not for want of denunciatory exposures of its errors, addressed to them by their religious enlighteners—or benighteners, rather. Trust the clerical nose for scenting out heresy, and the clerical legs for running it down. If the Agnostic has not suffered as much as the Atheist, it is because of his later birth, and not in consequence of any deficiency of courage. Like the Atheist, with whom here he has true and loving comradeship, he has gallantly withstood the rude shocks of a stormy adversity; and to-morrow, if the signal for conflict is sounded, he is ready to buckle on his armour, and go forth to do or die, with the invincible fortitude that a good cause alone can inspire.

J. P. GILMOUR.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF UNBELIEF.

THIRD PAPER.

UNBELIEF is always spoken of as though it were a mere negation, whose only mission could possibly be to doubt and to destroy. The consequence of this misconception is, that the Freethought party is denounced as being composed of members whose one aim it is to pull down, without having any desire to reconstruct. The pious orthodox believer looks upon the Sceptic as a sort of modern Goth and Vandal, dangerous to the well-being of society, and to be avoided by all who care for the public good. These are the wild fanatical notions, born of theological delusion, which are held in reference to unbelievers. But such views are most erroneous, to say nothing of their injustice. Some of the greatest benefactors of the race who ever lived have been unbelievers, that is, they have rejected those creeds and dogmas which are clung to so tenaciously by the Church. "It is historically true," remarks J. S. Mill, "that a large proportion of Infidels, in all ages, have been persons of distinguished integrity and honour.....Persons in greatest repute with the world, both for virtues and attainments, are well known, at least to their intimates, to be unbelievers.....It can do truth no good to blink the fact known to all who have the most ordinary acquaintance with literary history that a large portion of the noblest and most valuable moral teachings has been the work, not only of men who did not know, but of men who knew and rejected, the Christian faith" ("On Liberty"). And Mill was quite right, for some of the noblest men and women who have adorned the history of their times, and given to the world a record of the most useful deeds, have been unbelievers. Lucretius, Spinoza, Goethe, Humboldt, Dr. Priestley, Newton, Voltaire, Paine, Robert Owen, Lyell, Darwin, Tyndall, Huxley, and Harriet Martineau are prominent in the Pantheon of the world's benefactors; and these were all unbelievers from the orthodox standpoint. In France nearly all the scientific men are heretics; and Germany—the most scientific land of modern days—is notoriously Sceptical.

Unbelief is, of course, negative on the one side; but there is always another aspect of it to be seen, if one will only take the trouble to look fairly for it. Unbelief, in one thing, means belief in the opposite, and

it is quite possible that such opposite may be the more worthy of the two. This is another instance how the word unbelief is used in a sense that is most certainly not justifiable, because it conveys an idea of reproach, and almost of crime; and those to whom it is applied are thereby singled out for ignominious attack and violent denunciation. It may probably be replied here that the word is only employed in this sense when it refers to disbelief in things which are infallibly true, and too sacred to be tampered with, and far too well established to admit of the possibility of doubt in regard to them. But the position here assumed is absurd, since things which can be demonstrated to be true beyond the possibility of doubt cannot be disbelieved. No sane man can disbelieve in a proposition of Euclid, or even the simple statement that two and two make four. The fact, therefore, of the very existence of unbelief in regard to any matter proves that it has not been demonstrated to be true. As to infallibility, that idea has already been disposed of. Now, to say that anything is too sacred to be tampered with simply means that it is sacred in the eyes of those who accept it; for it cannot be sacred to him who disbelieves it. To assert that I am not at liberty to disbelieve in any dogma or principle because some one else holds it to be sacred is to say that he is infallible, and that I must, therefore, defer to his judgment, surrender my own right to think at all, and take my opinions ready-made from any one who is arrogant enough to claim the right to dictate. Moreover, this view is self-destructive, because a half-dozen different bodies may each be claiming this same allegiance, and, as their views will probably be conflicting and irreconcilable, to believe the pretensions of the one would be to disbelieve the claims of the others. But, if a person disbelieves, he also believes; his disbelief is the negative side of his faith, and his belief the positive side.

Disbelief in an error, or in that which is held to be an error, by any man involves belief in the opposite of the error, which is truth, or at all events that which is recognised as such by him who receives it. To describe a man as an unbeliever without having regard to what it is that he disbelieves, and consequently what he believes as the opposite of his unbelief, is not fair to him, and is equally unfair to those who from this description learn to estimate his views. Unbelief and belief must run hand in hand, and cannot be separated. The most devout believer is equally an unbeliever with him whom the world calls "Infidel" and stigmatises with reproachful terms and epithets in consequence of his Scepticism. They differ, of course, as to the sphere of their faith and doubt; but the one has no more right to be called a believer *par excellence* than has the other. All of us claim to have some truth on our side, and in that truth we are firm believers. Our faith in it is the basis of our disbelief in error, and the mainspring of our actions in the advocacy of

our views and the efforts which we make to bring others to our own way of thinking. We are only negationists so far as a pulling down and a clearing of the ground may be necessary to prepare the way for the new building that is to be erected. Just as Luther disbelieved in Romanism, and sought to destroy it, in order to make way for Protestantism, so Secularists to-day disbelieve in the errors of the Church, and are thereby inspired to work for the establishment of greater and grander truths than theology ever recognised or the Church ever possessed. The old Church called Luther an unbeliever, and it was right so far ; but a large portion of society came to recognise him as a true believer. His positive work was the outcome of his unbelief, and but for that it could have had no existence. Unbelief is ever the precursor of a newer and a truer faith ; it is the herald of progress, the forerunner of improvement, and the harbinger of coming good.

Unbelief leaves the mind free to receive new truth. The greatest opponent that truth has ever had to contend with is dogmatism. Wherever this fatal intellectual blight exists all hope of progress must disappear. A black cloud hangs over the mind of the dogmatist, shutting out every ray of the bright and gladdening beams of the sun of truth, and encircling all his mental powers in the deepest darkness. To such an one improvement is nearly impossible, and advancement in intellectual growth is never to be dreamed of. His motto is always, "As you were," and his watchword, if he has any, is like that of which Mackay preaches, "Backward ye deluded nations ; man to misery is born." Where a man dogmatically asserts that he has found all the truth which is capable to be found, and that his system contains perfect verity without any mixture of error, his views become stereotyped, and it is quite impossible that any change can take place in his opinions. His mind is not open to receive new light from any source whatever, and thought with him is a useless and vain operation, and investigation not only a work of supererogation, but even something worse—not merely the quintessence of folly, but the height of wickedness. His firm belief, as he calls his dogmatism, stands in the way of all change—an obstacle to every improvement and a bar to all progress. For him to receive any new truth would be to admit that what he possessed before was in some way defective and imperfect, and this his creed protests against with the authority of an infallible mandate. His position is necessarily stationary ; he stands just where his grandsires stood ages past, and where he would wish his descendants to remain for ages to come. Now, surely unbelief is far in advance of such a condition as this, for it fits the mind to receive the influence of any new truth that may result from fresh discovery, more profound thought, and further investigation. It leaves its possessor, without bias and prejudice, waiting

the new knowledge that is continually to be had for the seeking. It allows his mind full scope to grow and advance in wisdom, because he does not for one moment believe that he has reached a perfection beyond which it is impossible to proceed. In connection with unbelief there is always a certain amount of suspension of judgment—that is to say, there is such an absence of dogmatism that any new discovery of science, any fresh thought in philosophy, or better and clearer ideas in religion, are always welcomed as an addition to the stores of knowledge already in possession. A calm repose rests on his mental powers : there is, to use the words of Harriet Martineau, a “clearness of moral purpose,” which “naturally ensues”—a “healthy activity of the moral faculties.” The unbeliever, not being biassed by any settled views which he thinks came from heaven, is ever ready to learn and to be taught. There is about him a lofty liberty which he alone can enjoy. From whatever source the truth may come, he is willing—nay, desirous—to receive it. He is ever ready, as Dr. Watts observes, to—

“Seize on truth where'er 'tis found,
On heathen or on Christian ground.”

It is said that we ought to be fully persuaded in our own minds. So we may be, and yet be persuaded that a falsehood is true. The whole argument for the criminality of unbelief is based upon the supposition that we have an infallible guide, whereas the fact is that we neither have nor can have anything of the kind ; and, what is more, if we had such a guide, we could not understand it, and therefore it would be no guide to us. All that man requires is a reasonable probability, and his nature is so constituted that he is not capable of more. Besides, unbelief is not voluntary, and the power of belief is not under the control of the will. Belief is the result of conviction, conviction of evidence ; and no man can believe either without or against evidence, or disbelieve in the face of evidence sufficiently strong to carry conviction. Opinions change, theories pass away ; old faiths decay, and new ones appear in their place.

In connection with the Christian profession at the present time we have an illustration of such inconsistency as is not to be found in any other of the great religions of the world. History fails to record in association with those faiths such a marked difference between profession and action as we discover in the Christian Church. In Confucianism, Brahmanism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Mohammedanism there is a persistent and earnest effort to regulate personal conduct in accordance with the alleged sayings and injunctions of their respective founders. But it is not so with Christianity. Where are the professing Christians to-day who even make the attempt to adopt the

advice, practice, and precepts ascribed to Jesus of Nazareth? He was in every sense opposed to this world, and, in most emphatic terms, he denounced its enjoyments, its pride, its requirements, and particularly its riches. With him, heaven was of greater importance than earth, submission a higher duty than resistance, and poverty a greater virtue than wealth. Christ urged that practice was more valuable than profession, and that the grace of God was more efficacious than the ethics of man. Where, in the present day, do we find these views practically endorsed, even by Christians? They are really disbelievers to what they proclaim as being essential both for life and for death. O Consistency, where is thy blush? Before professing Christians condemn us for our unbelief, let them show us their genuine belief. Before they denounce us for rejecting what we regard to be error, let them prove that they practise that which they avow to be true. In the one case there is honesty of purpose and sincerity of conviction; in the other there is hypocrisy of profession and cant of fashion. Therefore, in the words of Polonius, we say to the Christian:—

“This, above all, to thine own self be true;
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.”

What, then, is the true philosophy of unbelief? It is the symbol of mental freedom, the mark of intellectual dignity, the genius of cultivated reason, the wisdom of being guided by progressive thought, of replacing old fancies with new realities, of proving all things and holding fast that which reason and experience, not tradition and theology, decide to be true; of resisting to the very utmost all despotic sway over the intellect, and of vindicating to the fullest extent the right of personal independence. The philosophy of unbelief refuses, in the words of Tyndall, “to purchase intellectual peace at the price of intellectual death. ‘The world is not without refugees of this description, nor is it wanting in persons who seek their shelter and try to persuade others to do the same. I would exhort you to refuse such shelter, and to scorn such base repose—to accept, if the choice be forced upon you, commotion before stagnation, the leap of the torrent before the stillness of the swamp. In the one there is, at all events, life, and therefore hope; in the other none.’ This, then, is the essence of our philosophy—not blind adherence to the past, but a loyal allegiance to the ever-present.

CHARLES WATTS.

THE POPULAR RELIGIOUS FAITH.

THE DOCTRINE OF DESIGN—(*Continued*).

CONTINUING the subject of last month, that "adaptability to an end is by no means always a proof of design," we will now take the historical phase called "Overruling Providence," by which is meant that every step in an historical series is made by a special overruling power to lead up to a given end. This is, in fact, historical evolution. The first step of the series ending in man is a marine mollusc, called ascidian larva, a kind of animal fungus, like a bit of tough leather made into a pouch. The leathery pouch has no head, but has two openings, one branchial and the other anal, from which streams of water are ejected when the creature is touched or irritated. Well, that is the ovum, or animal basis, of our Homers and Shakespeares, our Aristotles and Bacons, our Platos and Darwins—that headless leather pouch clinging like a fungus to a rock.

Overruling providence developed this marine mollusc into a sort of lancelet, a lowly-organised fish, something like a very primitive eel, the first type of vertebrate animals, in development between a jelly-fish and an annelid or worm. This lancelet has a sort of a head; but its head is scarcely distinguishable from its body, except that, like its tail, it tapers to a point. There are numerous minute lancelets; but those of larger size measure some two inches in length. They are semi-transparent, without scales, and burrow in the sand. A dorsal fin runs down the back, and the spine is represented by a fibrous sheath composed of membranous plates. There is no trace of a skull, none of a brain, no eyes, no ears; but there is a mouth, and this mouth is the representative of the head. The blood is colourless, and instead of a heart the creature has several blood-vessels, which dilate and contract successively. This is an advance on the ascidian, but is still a long way off Adam and Eve in Paradise.

Overruling providence, like a *deus ex machina*, steps in again to develop this molluscos worm into a fish; not all at once into such fish as now swarm in our seas and rivers, but queer placoids and ganoids, with skeletons of cartilage, and tails like a V, made by the thumb and first finger of a man's hand. In the Devonian period the placoids were

covered with horny plates of unequal sizes and irregular shapes ; but in the ganoids these plates or scales were regular in shape, and covered with a bright enamel. The most noted of these creatures were the head-shield, the berry-bone, and the Wing-fish.* Here, again, is a manifest advance ; but still the series is in a very embryonic state.

Next come the amphibians, half water and half air livers, and developed by overruling providence into reptiles and birds. Here, strange to say, we can refer the reader to Genesis i. 20 : " And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the creeping thing that hath life, and fowl (or bird) to fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven." So providence developed reptiles and birds from the amphibians ; and now we get creatures which breathe the open air, and possess lungs, or an apparatus for breathing, more highly developed than that of fishes.

We now want to find a link between birds and mammals, and we have the very thing in the monotremes. The creature called by Cuvier the *ornitho-rynchus*, or bird-snout, has a mouth resembling the bill of a duck, and is almost web-footed. These monotremes suckle their young from a mammary orifice, but have no marsupial pouch. The marsupials bring us to the next stage.

These animals bear about the same relation to the higher mammals as a Hottentot or savage in its lowest type to a Circassian, Greek, or Roman. To speak philologically, we should call a marsupial a "crude form." It contains the elements of the developed form, and that is all. The premature production of the foetus of marsupials is extraordinary. As sheep and oxen chew the cud, and pass their food in different stages of mastication from one stomach to another, so marsupials pass their foetus, after birth, into a second matrix. Incapable of motion, and scarcely displaying even a germ of limbs or external organs, the baby marsupial attaches itself to the *mammæ* of the mother, where it remains fixed by the mouth till it has acquired a growth and development resembling that of the new-born animals. The skin of the mother is so arranged round the *mammæ* as to form a pouch in which not only the imperfect foetus, attached to the nipple by its mouth, remains till fully developed, but into which, long after it is able to run about, it leaps when alarmed or is desirous of concealment. Marsupials hold a link between egg-laying animals and those which bear their young in their proper animal form.

Now we come to the next development, in which the foetus is attached to the mother by a membrane called the placenta ; this attach-

* Called by the Greek compounds, *Cephalaspis*, *Coccosteus*, and *Pterichthys*. We omit the *Lepidosirens*, or *Lepidoids*, of the Oolitic system.

ment in some of the species is immediate, and in others, as in man, by an umbilical cord. All mammals, except the marsupials, have some sort of placenta ; so that here we have a marked development, or grade, from marsupials to placental mammals.

The next advance is to the lemuridæ, the first of the animals with a well-developed thumb, and the link joining quadrupeds to the quadrimanous family. From the lemuridæ we go next to the monkey race—first to simiadæ ; then to the New World monkey, with the nostrils widely separated ; then to the Old World monkey, with the nostrils separated only by a narrow septum, like the human nose ; and, lastly, to man.

This gradation from mollusc to man may be called, if you like, “overruling providence ;” but the term is very misleading, and “natural development” is far more appropriate. If, however, this development is admitted, it lays the axe to the root of creative design. All the wonderful adaptations to ends so ostentatiously paraded in natural theology have been gradually and slowly developed from the very crudest forms. We have here traced the crude form of man to a jelly-fish, and might have gone still further back, if it had been needful ; but it was not so. Very similar to this natural development in the animal body is the historical development of man from Adam to the angelic state ; or, to take a narrower example, from Joseph to “Julian” of THE AGNOSTIC.

The nest egg of the Agnostic “Julian” was Joseph’s coat of many colours. That was the ascidian, or marine mollusc, from which sprung the “present popular faith.” Jacob gave Joseph a coat of many colours. This made the boy conceited, and his brothers envious. Hatred was the natural result ; and the brothers, to get rid of the dreamer, sold him to some travelling merchants who were going down to Egypt. In Egypt the boy was sold to Potiphar to wait on his wife Zuleika. Zuleika fell in love with him ; and because Joseph was too modest for the lady she charged him with wantonness, and he was cast into prison. Potiphar being a great man in Egypt, Joseph was confined in the state prison, in which were confined at the time the royal cup-bearer and royal baker. It so happened that these servants of the pharaoh both dreamt a dream, which they told to Joseph ; and Joseph, in interpreting the dreams, said the cup-bearer would be restored to his office, but the baker would be put to death ; and so it fell out. Ere long the pharaoh of Egypt himself dreamt a dream about seven lean kine eating up seven fat ones, and was very curious to know what it meant. The royal cup bearer told his master to consult Joseph ; and Joseph predicted that Egypt would have seven years of plenty, followed by seven years of scarcity, so he advised the pharaoh to make provision, during the first seven years, for

the lean ones which were to follow. This was good advice, and the pharaoh deputed Joseph to see it carried out. The famine came, and extended to Canaan, where Joseph's father and brothers were living. Jacob, being sore put to it, sent his sons into Egypt to buy corn; and Joseph, having provided for their immediate wants, told them to come with all their relatives and live in Egypt. So Jacob and all his clan went to Egypt, where, with the permission of the pharaoh, they settled in the land of Goshen. Well, time rolled on. Jacob died; Joseph also died; the pharaoh whom Joseph served died; the dynasty died out, and a new dynasty succeeded, which "knew not Joseph." This new dynasty saw with jealousy an *imperium in imperio*. The Jews in 200 years had grown to a formidable multitude, which, like the Greek helots, might rise in rebellion and trouble the kingdom. To prevent this, one of the pharaohs of the new dynasty set the Goshen Jews to assist in building national edifices; and, to arrest the increase, he commanded his police to put to death every male Jew in Goshen as soon as it was born. Not long after this edict Moses was born, and the mother, to conceal him, put him in a basket which she hid among the rushes of the Nile. The daughter of the reigning pharaoh, going with her maidens to bathe in the Nile, heard the cries of the baby boy, and adopted him; and Moses lived in the royal palace till he was forty years old. He then interfered in a squabble between a Jew and an Egyptian, and, as he slew the Egyptian, he was obliged to flee the kingdom; and he lay perdu for forty years. He then returned to Egypt, and conducted the Goshen Jews across the Red Sea or Gulf of Suez into the desert of Arabia. Here they wandered about for forty years, when Moses died; and Joshua led the people over the river Jordan into what is called the Holy Land. Settled in the land, they were ruled by Judges till they resolved to have a king, and selected Saul to rule over them. Saul ruled the normal forty years, and was succeeded by David, who reigned forty years, and was succeeded by his son Solomon, who reigned forty years also. Jesus the son of Mary was a descendant of the royal house of David; from him the Christian religion arose; and the Christian religion has given birth to these papers on "The Popular Religious Faith."

Theologians call this sequence of events "overruling providence;" but they might just as well call the sequence of developments from the jelly-fish to man "overruling providence." It is impossible to believe that God from all eternity mapped out and ordained that "Julian" should write in THE AGNOSTIC a series of papers on the popular religious faith because the fond old Jacob gave his favourite boy Benjamin a coat of many colours. Yet, if it was overruling providence that planted hatred in the hearts of Joseph's brothers—if it was overruling providence that caused Zuleika to make love to her beautiful boy-slave—if it was over-

ruling providence that appointed taskmasters over the Jews of Goshen—if it was overruling providence which made David murder the husband of Bathsheba, that he might marry the widow, and become the root of the stem of Jesus—then was it overruling providence that made “Julian” write these papers to prove overruling providence a baseless myth.

JULIAN.

(To be continued.)

MY LOVE!

OH ! thou whose charms have o'er my spirit
 A bless'd and sweet enchantment cast,
 May I this heavenly kindness merit,
 And pay it with affection vast !
 Riches nor titles can I offer ;
 In life I play no gilded part ;
 But with this hand to thee I proffer
 An honest, truthful, loving heart.

If that fond glance translates with trueness
 A free consent and love's return,
 There is more wealth in its clear blueness
 Than hoards for which your misers burn.
 For soul with soul thus freely greeting
 Shakes off from life its grosser parts :
 There is no joy to match the meeting
 Of two devoted, loving hearts.

THOMAS MEAD.

THE WORSHIP OF RELICS.

THIRD PAPER.

SUCH writers as Carlyle, provoked by the excesses committed under the guise of liberty, have rabidly declaimed against liberty and its adorers. These adorers have not been wrong in consecrating their whole being to liberty, but in forgetting the accompaniments needful to make liberty wholesome and blissful. The air can be rendered stagnant or pestilential, but cannot be annihilated ; and liberty cannot be extinguished even under the most despotic governments, though it may be despoiled of its most salutary elements. And, like the atmosphere, it clears itself of poisonous and stifling vapours by fierce explosions, by thunders and lightnings. That revolutions are most frequent in despotic countries does not mean that liberty has never existed there ; it means that liberty is striving to gain health and vigour. Though not the offspring of liberty, religion demands liberty as a necessary condition. With science, however, religion has no necessary connection. It is independent of science, though not its natural, eternal, and inevitable foe, as has sometimes been represented. It is a common, but a very erroneous, opinion that, through the victories of science, religion and the faith in religion have declined. Even admitting that science diminishes and destroys the belief in the miraculous, we are driven to confess that this is a gain rather than a loss, forasmuch as mystery deepens in the degree that miracle dies or grows dim. Science and religion came into the world together : the one is as old as the other. Perpetually science is spoken of as if it were something new ; but when the Tree of Life was planted the Tree of Knowledge was planted. If in our age science has left religion far behind, it is mainly because nearly all the discoveries of science have industrial applications ; but it is also because religion is stationary, worships relics in the widest sense of the word, instead of worshipping the living God, and is morally sterile or diseased. Science, in the shape of Comtetism, has attempted to organise itself as a religion. But religious Comtetism is simply a frigid, a half-ghastly, half-ludicrous caricature of Catholicism. It consists of abstractions ; it offers homage to abstractions ; and its priests and its prophets are not much more alive than abstractions. Evangels of a still drearier and

punier kind than Comtetism have the preposterous pretension to make science the providence of life, yet do nothing to carry out this the only article of their creed. As scavengers they might do some useful work in sweeping away theological rubbish; but they fail even as scavengers, for they merely let loose stench instead of removing nuisances. If it is impossible to sympathise with theological systems which are worn out, and Churches which are leprous semblances, it is equally impossible to admire the modes in which those systems, those Churches, are assailed. Superstition has been very cruel, very horrible; but religion, besides being a blessing in itself, has been interwoven with everything divinest in man. Moreover, prove, if you can, that religion has been nothing but a curse, you cannot expel, cannot eradicate, the religious sentiment from human nature. Whether you, the false priests, starve or poison, or you, the false prophets, denounce the religious sentiment, it is invincible, indestructible. And when, as in this sad time, it is enslaved, debased by the worship of relics, it can be brought back to the worship of the living God by nothing but holy and heroic individuality. There is in man, as there may be said to be in the universe, which man typifies, an eternal Christos, as well as an eternal Prometheus. The eternal Christos represents the sweetness, the eternal Prometheus the strength, of Humanity. In the eternal Christos we have resignation, abnegation, love; in the eternal Prometheus the indomitable spirit of revolt. They are not foes, though they seldom act together. In the same individual they may be found, co-operating or conflicting or bursting by turns into sudden force. Those individuals in whom the eternal Christos and the eternal Prometheus co-exist are a perplexity to others, and still more a perplexity to themselves, so rapid is their change of motives—as, for instance, from pity to indignation, from indignation to pity. The eternal Christos softens and sanctifies the community; but it is the eternal Prometheus that invigorates it, defying and helping to dethrone false gods, and teaching man to be his own redeemer. It is the eternal Prometheus that is chiefly needed now—not, however, as the antagonist, but as the ally of the eternal Christos.

In Scotland there never has been any religion, except a reproduction of Hebrew ferocity; though the Scots have deluded themselves into the belief that they are pre-eminently a religious people. Carlyle had a less clear and genial idea of religion than even his countrymen in general. He was a supremely gifted pictorial writer, with the most wayward humour, the most perverse temper, but neither the sage nor the prophet his idolators and imitators have proclaimed him, though, in private life, more nobly helpful than sages and prophets often are. Deficient in the sense of literary and artistic form, which Goethe had to excess, Carlyle took Goethe as his instructor, inspirer, enricher, in what

he himself lacked, and was conscious of lacking. And herein he was wise. But he thought that Goethe had been his moral as well as his literary teacher. It was from Goethe he professed to have learned the Doctrine of Renunciation, which enables those who embrace it to be valiantly patient, and to bow without a murmur to the decrees of destiny. But surely the Doctrine of Renunciation occupies a conspicuous place in every religion, in every system of morality, and was far more grandly taught by the Stoics than by Goethe, who was essentially an Epicurean. And, at the best, can it imply more than a negative attitude, include more than negative activities? Whatsoever is really great or good in man is positive. Only by warfare with Nature can our harmony with Nature be achieved. The profound Greek saying, that war is the father of all things, indicates not merely incessant elemental commotion, but also the hunger for rebellion with which every atom is endowed—the Anteros, who is the brother and yet the enemy of Eros. The poetry of Byron, let its merits or demerits otherwise be what they may, was the wild shriek of an anguished world. It had a tragic reality and countless tragic responses; it was the anathema of what was wrong in the universe more than the protest against what was wrong in the community. Byron burned with the enthusiasm and the rage of the eternal Prometheus, whose son he was. The eternal Prometheus hath many other sons; but their voices are feeble or unheeded. If from age to age there is the song of the rejoicing stars praising the mystery of mysteries, there is, from age to age, the wail of tortured creation. And sometimes the wail is so fierce and loud that the song of the rejoicing stars can no longer be heard. Then the wail ceaseth for a season, and false prophets rise and men dream delusive dreams of happiness and peace. By-and-by the wail bursts forth more terrible than ever, and the eternal Prometheus, breaking his chains, flings them and the rock to which he has been bound at the lies of gods and men.

After the failure of numberless palliatives for numberless social evils and sorrows, there will be Socialist insurrections all over the earth; but they also will fail. And then will come one of the primordial Promethean revolutions such as, desolating, visit the earth when all real, all living faith has died in the hearts of men, and when noble souls are slain for their very nobleness. When the Promethean revolution is complete the eternal Christos will appear anew on the scene. Beyond that point it is not incumbent on me to prophesy.

What I want to make clear in my rhapsody or homily, or whatever it may be called, is that all reformers are working fruitlessly who do not herald or help the Promethean revolution. The trifling and transient matters debated by sects and parties concern true reformers not. These should simply place themselves in the very centre of boldest, divinest

action, indifferent to the questions agitated by pedants and partisans. The tendency to association, which is a characteristic of the present age, is a sign of moral weakness and moral decay, besides weakening, or utterly slaying, patriotic devotedness. In the Middle Ages there was association from the consciousness and the plenitude of strength; now there is association from the consciousness of debility. The individual hastens by association to merge or efface his individuality, as if plunging into a kind of Nirvana. No institution in our country has so much social influence as the Church of England; but it has no moral, no religious, no humanising power. It has existed for three centuries and a half. It has wallowed in wealth; all the leading classes have been its co-operators; yet, besides its other sins of omission and commission, it has done nothing to disenthral the mass of the populace from monstrous and unparalleled brutality. It is a very pleasant Church, an exceedingly decorous Church, a charmingly somnolent Church; and its edifices are a delightful feature in the landscape; yet, left to itself, it would have allowed religion to die. Daily its social sway and attractiveness increase, and daily its moral asthenia and religious sterility are made more and more manifest. There is rather more religious life in the Dissenting sects, but not more moral vigour. They are kept from falling to pieces by mechanical as distinguished from spontaneous and sympathetic associations. Apart from the Churches mechanical association is no less despotic and ignoble. Artizans combine for the most selfish purposes, but principally that the insignificant and the imbecile may be raised to the level of the gifted and the energetic. To mechanical association have to bend both thrift and charity. The poor are not taught to rely on themselves, but on parochial relief and on the blood of Christ; and, after being thoroughly demoralised, they are urged to put under the care of government or of a benefit club the pence they have snatched from intemperance and improvidence. In charity there is either the indiscriminate giving of alms to get rid of importunate applicants—the cadgers who would be rowdies, roughs, or even burglars, if they had the courage; or organisations are multiplied, from which few derive advantage, except the officials with large salaries. How rare is divine compassion for divine compassion's own sweet sake! A legal provision for the poor is England's supreme curse; it engenders pauperism by nourishing the pauper spirit, and it never brings effectual succour to those who most deserve sympathy and aid, the nobly struggling, who, forlorn and weary, fall down vanquished. England has to drag on loads of legal and other lumber, partly from the tyranny of custom, but far more from the thralldom of that mechanical association which renders, for instance, a parish vestry so mischievous and so ridiculous. Let, then, the individual be per-

suaded that he can be the forerunner of the Promethean revolution only so far as he trusts to his individuality alone. It does not follow therefrom that he should be a misanthropic Timon or an eccentric Diogenes. We can impel and mould society no further than we mingle with society ; and by holy and heroic individuality we draw near to, fly not from, a centre. Sweet things are known by their sweetness ; strong things are known by their strength. The star needs not to proclaim to immensity that it is a child of the sky, not a meteor of the marsh. Shine on as a star, and no one can mistake thee for a meteor. If fatuous mortals deem not thee, but the meteor, worthy of admiration, the loss is theirs, not thine. Even if, as has sometimes been maintained, individualism leads straight to anarchy, the anarchical must ever be preferred to the false. When spurious order is in the world it is vain to picture and to preach true order, for this cannot come till after a mad outburst of the anarchical. Chronic anarchy, such as has had for centuries Ireland as its choicest theatre, is consummate wretchedness, most horrible guilt. But acute anarchy is frequently the world's only chance of salvation. Burke has been lauded for foresight and insight ; the cloud, however, of his sophistries and malignities hindered him from perceiving that France could not be redeemed, regenerated, by those slow constitutional methods which are habitual in England, and which hinder the English from ever having thorough and comprehensive reforms.

Alike under the eternal Prometheus and under the eternal Christos happiness is not, cannot be, the lot of man ; and all systems which predict a happier future for man are false. Man dreams a dream of the Unrealisable and the Unattainable ; let him dream on : mock not his ecstatic visions. And if the worship of relics can add to the ecstasy, let us not disturb the worship. Whatsoever recalls that which we have fondly loved is a relic, and the pleasures of memory are often more enchanting than the pleasures of hope. If for man there is no abiding bliss, for the martyr, the prophet, the hero, there is no recompense. To those who reveal to their brethren the eternal Prometheus and the eternal Christos there is the doom of the mythical Christos and the mythical Prometheus. Whether they bow in meekness their head to God as a merciful father, or finally defy the gods as merciless torturers, they suffer ceaselessly and ineffably. They grow so familiar with pain that pangs are to them a luxury, as they were to Santa Teresa. Death they dread not ; death they seek not ; but a longing for rest they cannot repress. Dying, they know that their noblest thoughts must perish with them ; but they also know that revealers of the eternal Christos and of the eternal Prometheus must rise up to all generations.

WILLIAM MACCALL.

THE GOD IDEA.

FIFTH PAPER.

THE date of the Yahudean migration into Syria was certainly not earlier than about B.C. 250, despite the declaration of interested parties that these people were known as Israelites and Jews for centuries before that time. The following quotation from Major-General Forlong's "Rivers of Faith" is worth reproducing on this point:—"The first notice of the Jews is, *possibly*, that of certain Shemitic rulers of the Aram, paying tribute about 850 B.C. to Vool-Nirari, the successor of Shalmaneser of Syria, regarding which, however, much more is made by Biblicists than the simple record warrants. This is the case also where Champollion affirms that mention is made on the Theban temples of the capture of certain towns of the land we call Judea, this being thought to prove the existence of Jews. Similar assumption takes place in regard to the hieratic papyri of the Leyden Museum, held to belong to the time of Rameses II. ; an inscription read on the rocks of El-Hamamat, and the discovery of some names like Chedor-laomer in the records of Babylonia ; but this is all the 'evidence' as to the existence of ancient Jews which has been advanced, and the most is made of it in Dr. Birch's opening address on 'The Progress of Biblical Archæology,' at the inauguration of that Society. The only *logical* conclusion justifiable, when we give up the *inspiration* theory, is that Arabs and Syro-Phenicians were known to Assyrians and Egyptians, and this none would deny. Indeed, we readily grant with Dr. Birch that, 'under the nineteenth and twentieth Egyptian dynasties, the influence of the Armenœan nations is distinctly marked ; that not only, by blood and alliances, had the Pharaohs been closely united with the princes of Palestine and Syria, but that the language of the period abounds in Semitic words, quite different from the Egyptian, with which they were embroidered and intermingled.' Could it possibly be otherwise? Is it not so this day? Is a vast and rapidly-spawning Shemitic continent like Arabia not to influence the narrow delta of a river adjoining it, or the wild highlands of Syria to its north? Of course, Arabs, or Shemites, were everywhere spread over Egypt, Syria, and Phenicia, as well as in their ancient seats of empire in Arabi Irak (Kaldia), and on the imperial mounds of Kalneh and Kouyunjik, *but not necessarily as Jews*. I cannot find that these last were anything more

than possibly a peculiar religious sect of Arabs, who settled down from their pristine nomadic habits, and obtained a *quasi* government under petty princes or sheks, such as we have seen take place in the case of numerous Arabian and Indian sects."

Again, the author of "Rivers of Faith" remarks: "No efforts, say the leaders of the Biblical Archæological Society, have been able to find, either amid the numerous engravings on the rocks of Arabia Petrea or Palestine, *any save Phenician inscriptions*—not even a record of the Syro-Hebrew character, which was once thought to be the peculiar property of Hebrews. '*Most of those inscriptions hitherto discovered do not date anterior to the Roman Empire*' (Dr. Birch, President of Soc., op. cit., p. 9). 'Few, if any, monuments (of Jews) have been obtained in Palestine' or the neighbouring countries of any useful antiquity, save the Moabite Stone, and the value of this last is all in favour of my previous arguments on these points. At the pool of Siloam we have an 'inscription, *in the Phenician character*, as old as the time of the kings.....It is incised upon the walls of a rock chamber, apparently *dedicated to Baal, who is mentioned on it.*' So that here, in a most holy place of this 'peculiar people,' we find only Phenicians, and these worshipping the Sun-God of Fertility, as was customary on every coast of Europe, from unknown times down to the rise of Christianity. The Biblical Archæological Society and British Museum authorities tell us frankly and clearly that no Hebrew square character can be proved to exist till after the Babylonian captivity, and that, 'at all events, *this inscription of Siloam shows that the curved or Phenician character was in use in Jerusalem itself under the Hebrew Monarchy, as well as the contemporaneous Phenicia, Moabitis, and the more distant Assyria.* No monument, indeed,' continues Dr. Birch, 'of greater antiquity, inscribed in the square character (Hebrew), has been found, *as yet, older than the fifth century, A.D.*; and the coins of the Maccabean princes, as well as those of the revolter Barcochab, are impressed with *Samaritan* characters.'" As to the Moabite Stone, I would refer my readers to a little work entitled "An Inquiry into the Age of the Moabite Stone," by Samuel Sharpe, the celebrated author of "The History of Egypt," in which will be found abundant evidence to prove that the inscription on the Stone is a forgery of about the year A.D. 260.

Apart from the history contained in the books of the Old Testament, there is absolutely no record of the Jews as an independent people, except that contained in the writings of Josephus (about A.D. 100); and, although that author may be tolerably trustworthy when relating matters near to his own time, yet in his description of Jewish antiquities he evidently, as he himself asserts, rests only on tradition. For instance, he alone records the story of Alexander entering the holy

place at Jerusalem and offering sacrifice on the altar ; but Arrian, in his "Anabasis of Alexander the Great," where he specially treats of the life and actions of this great conqueror, says not one word about such a place as Jerusalem, or about such a story as that recorded by Josephus. Curtius, who wrote a far more detailed account of the life and conquests of Alexander, mentions neither Jerusalem nor the story of Alexander and the holy place. Herodotus, about B.C. 430, when narrating the two raids of the Scythians through Syria, as far as Egypt, says not a word about any Jews. Xenophon, who wrote 150 years after they were said to have returned from Babylon, or about B.C. 386, appears to have been unconscious of their existence, only mentioning the Syrians of Palestine. Neither did Sanchoniathon, Ctesias, Berosus, nor Manetho even once mention them as a nation. Diodorus also, when writing of the siege of Tyre by the soldiers of Alexander, neither mentions the Jews as a nation nor Jerusalem as their chief town. In fact, we have no account of them at all, except that contained in the Old Testament and that in the writings of Josephus, until we find them subject to the Romans, under Antiochus Epiphanes, about B.C. 165, when in all probability they had just settled down into a dependent nation, having been driven into Syria by the Babylonians, whose fertile valleys these Arabian nomads had attempted to colonise. Being surrounded on all sides by nations whose religions so very far surpassed their own in development, it did not take long for the Yahoudi (afterwards called Jews) to become affected by the mythological dramas of their neighbours ; and, in carefully examining the mythical records of their tribe, we find that they very soon became acquainted with, and in some cases offered worship to, almost all the purely Semitic and Chaldean, as well as to a few of the Egyptian, deities. Their principal god always remained as before, El (אֱל) signifying the zodiacal sign *Aries*, the heavenly ram and first of the twelve zodiacal figures. Combined with Yah (יְהוּ), the abbreviation of Yahouh (יְהוָה), their tribal deity, it formed a compound word, Eloh (אֱלֹהִים), or Elyah (אֱלִיָּהּ, the ו and י being interchangeable), the plural of which was Elohim (אֱלֹהִים), a word used frequently in the Bible to signify the supreme God. Bearing in mind the fact that the fables of the Bible are not actual history, but merely so many accounts of the ever-recurring phenomena of the sidereal heavens, and that in the various saviour myths the vernal equinoctial sign, or saviour sign, *Aries*, was looked upon as the supreme god, who housed the new-born sun on his first appearance in the upper world, just as in the present day the song of praise on Easterday is "Worthy is the lamb who was slain (crucified) to receive the power and bring us back salvation to the world," the meanings of these names of the

supreme deity become apparent at once. All the words—and, in fact, almost every divine name found in every divine record—signify the sun in one or other of the divisions of his annual or daily apparent march, or else one of the divisions itself. El signifies the first and saviour sign of the zodiac, the celestial ram, and is always used when the winter period is referred to, because from the autumnal to the vernal equinox the sun-god, Yahouh, is separated from the ram, El, which remains god of the lower world, until again united with its spouse, the sun, at the vernal equinox, becoming the ram-sun-god, El-Yah or Eloh, whose plural is Elohim, the ram-sun-gods, from the vernal to the autumnal equinox, when the sun and *Aries* are together for six months. At a later time, when the old Bacchus worship was revived at Alexandria in the person of the young Semitic Yahoshua, who was named Iesus, we have a good illustration of this when the sun-god, in his agony at being separated from the ram at the autumnal equinox or crucifixion, exclaimed: "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"—"My ram, my ram, why hast thou forsaken me?" In, I believe, every instance in which the plural word, Elohim, is used in the Bible the reference is to the summer half of the year, from the vernal to the autumnal equinox, when El and Yah are together. We meet with El—in its Babylonian form, Bel; in its Aramæan forms, Bel and Belus; and in its Phenician form, Baal—frequently in the Bible, and often in combination with other deities, as El-Shaddai and Bel-Shaddai (בעלשדי), signifying the "breasted ram," or the ram at the vernal equinox, the period of suckling.* Other forms of the same divine name were Baal-Berith, god of the equinox or covenant (*co-venire*, to come together, as when the ecliptic crosses the equator at the two equinoxes or crucifixions); Baal-Yah and El-Yah, rendered in the authorised version respectively Bealiah and Elijah, when in reality they signify the god Yahouh, or ram-sun-god; El-Yah also does duty for Joel; Elishah signifies the saviour ram; Eliakim, the setting ram; Eleazar, the creating ram; Samuel, the god of fame, or famous ram; Daniel, the ram judge; and Israel, the struggle with El. The Phenician Hercules wrestled with Typhon (the sun at the meridian) in the sand, just as Israel or Jacob wrestled with Elohim in the dust—Hercules, like Jacob, being wounded in the thigh; and the Canaanites knew the Greek Hercules, who wrestled with Zeus, by the name of Ysrael.

Baal-gad (בעלגד) was the god of Fortune, Gad being a Babylonian deity representing fortune, which was placed at the foot of Hermon for

* El not only signified a ram, but also a lamb, or any other kind of sheep. The vernal equinoxial sign, for instance, of the Persians was a lamb, while that of the Egyptians was a ram.

public worship. From this deity G D (גד) is derived the English words God and Good, the German Gott and Gut, the Danish and Swedish Gud, and the Wesleyan Methodist Gawd. Baal-Peor was the Phallic deity (*Deus Vulva*), god of the opening, worshipped largely by the Hebrews, who, as General Forlong points out, "had a strong solophalik fire-and-serpent cult. They all had Bâal, Nebu, and Peor on their high places; Yachavah or Yahuê, the 'Grove,' or Asherah [Ashtoreth] and fire in their central groves." Baal Zephon was the god Typhon; Baal Hermon was another name for Gad, god, of Fortune; Baal Hazor was the god Hathor; and Baal Hamon (בעל חמון) was the god Amen, or Jupiter Ammon. The word Yahouh, in various terminal forms, was frequently used to designate the sun at different times and seasons—as Joseph, the lamented Yah; Jehu, Yahouh himself; and, according to Gesenius, Jehozabad, Yeho the giver; Jehohanan, Yeho is good; Jehoiada, Yeho is knowing; Jehoshua, or Joshua; Jehoshaphat; Jehoiakim; Hoshea; Zedetujah, etc. Yahoshua (Joshua) was the Canaanitish name for the Phenician Yês or Iês, and Egyptian Mises, and became in Latin Josue, or Jesus, according to whether the Romans referred to the Phenician or Canaanitish Bacchus, whose histories, though similar in the main, differed considerably in details. The Egyptian Mises became also the Jewish law-giver and leader, Moses, and is described in Ex. xxxiv. as being horned like Bacchus (*vide* my "Popular Faith Unveiled"). The Adonis myth occurs over and over again in fragments throughout the Bible, the Babylonish name Adon frequently being found in that form (אדן), in its Hebrew rendering Adonai (אדני), and occasionally in its Aramæan form of Tammuz. It occurs alone, as in Psalm cx. 1, "Yahouh said to Adonis, sit at my right hand;" in Isaiah vii. 14, "Therefore our Adonis himself shall give you a sign;" and in conjunction with Yahouh, as in Isaiah vii. 7, "Thus saith Yahouh, our Adonis," and numerous other places. It also occurs with different terminations, to signify different forms and positions of the sun-god—as Adoniyah or Adonijah, Adonis is Yahouh; Adoni-zedek, the liberated Adonis; Adoni-bezek, the rising Adonis; etc. The old Semitic sun-god Shamsh remained, as of old, the Hebrew שמש (Shemosh), signifying the sun; and his Greek *alter ego*, Hercules, the sun-hero, was not forgotten either, for we find a very poor attempt to reproduce him in the history of Samson. Moloch, Dagon, and other Semitic deities are also introduced into the Jewish Scriptures. There is one other deity frequently met with which must now be named, and that is the Egyptian Amen—the Zeus Amen (Ζεύς Ἀμὴν) of the Greeks, and the Jupiter Ammon of the Romans. This god Ammon (אמון or אמנ) was worshipped by the Jews as the equal in power to, and the counterpart of, Yahouh, and was called by the very same names

by which he was known to the Egyptians—viz., the hidden god, true and faithful witness (which epithet gave origin to the Greek adverb, 'Αμην, truly), and saviour of the world, or regenerator of nature. In Isaiah xlv. 15 we read, "Truly thou art the hidden god of Israel, the saviour;" and, again, in chapter lxxv. 16, "He who blesses himself on earth shall bless himself by his god Ammon (אֱמֹן); and he who sweareth in the earth shall swear by the god Ammon, because the former troubles are delivered to oblivion, and because they are hidden from mine eyes." This hidden or occult god, Ammon, or Amen, is frequently addressed in the Psalms and other places, and is there identified with Yahouh and Adonis. In Psalm xxvii. 8, 9, we read, "Seek ye my face. My heart said to thee, Thy face, O Yahouh, will I seek. O hide not thy face from me;" and Psalm x. 1, "And why standest thou so far off, Yahouh, and hidest thy face in the needful time of trouble?" Psalm lxxxix. 46 says, "Yahouh, how long wilt thou hide thyself?" Verses 49, 50, "O our Adonis, where are thy loving kindnesses of old, which thou swearest to David in thy truth?" and verse 52, "Blessed be Yahouh for evermore (who is) Ammon, even Ammon." In Isaiah i. 15 we also read, "When ye spread forth your hands I will hide myself from you; yea, when ye make many prayers I will not hear you." We find the same god also in the New Testament Scriptures of the later Christian sect of Eclectic Egyptian Jews. In the Apocalypse, for instance, the word 'Αμην is rendered "Amen" in the authorised version, and is sometimes met with as a Greek noun, 'Ο 'Αμην (never heard of in the classics), when it is rendered "the Amen," which senseless rendering is no doubt intended to conceal the real and obvious meaning. In Rev. i. 18 we read, "I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I, Ammon, am alive for evermore," the word 'Αμην being rendered "Amen;" and in chap. iii. 14, "These things saith Ammon ["the Amen" in the authorised version], the true and faithful witness, the beginning of the creation of God." As the celestial ram or lamb, *Aries*, Amen is again mentioned in chap. xiii. 8, "The lamb which has been slain from the foundation of the world"—that is, each year at the vernal equinox, when the occult god rose from his hiding-place in the lower hemisphere to bring salvation to the world.

HERBERT JUNIUS HARDWICKE, M.D., F.R.C.S.

(To be concluded next month.)

RELIGION AND WAR.

SECOND PAPER.

I do not desire to pour contempt on these primitive beliefs and practices *as such*, any more than I would cast bitter ridicule on my own early beliefs or those of my children. What I do oppose and deny is the notion that these puerilities of the childhood of the world have acquired such a prescriptive right through some assumed process of supernatural revelation and inspiration that this mature and enlightened age must toddle in their leading-strings, and that to doubt that they were Divinely appointed is sure evidence of an evil heart of unbelief.

"And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering; but unto Cain and to his offering he had no respect." Now, this is really very puzzling until we perceive by the anachronisms that the late writer has manipulated the legend. We know very well that in those primitive times there was no conception of any "*the* Lord" who could be worshipped by two such different tribes, but that each tribe had its own local or tribal deity. Of course, if Cain somehow missed his way and got into Abel's temple by mistake, Abel's God (or the priests who served the altar, and ate a portion at least of the sacrifice) would be likely to disdain his offering, just as John Bull would turn up his nose at the Irishman's dinner of "potato and point," or the Hindoo's frugal fare of rice and salt.

Then the story tells us that Cain was very wroth, and afterwards that, in the dispute which followed, "Cain rose up against Abel, his brother, and slew him;" and after, that God, to punish Cain, said he should no longer live in his wonted habitation as a settled and prosperous farmer, but should be "a fugitive and a vagabond"—in fact, a nomad wanderer again. Clearly the whole story describes some inter-tribal dispute, in which a wandering shepherd tribe succeeded in dispossessing and evicting an agricultural tribe. To us moderns it may seem very stupid to fight about the composition of a sacrifice; and one can only reply that it did not seem so stupid to them, or that the religious reason assigned was very largely a *pretext* of quarrel, as it has so often been since.

Whatever our interpretation of the story, it does really testify to the antiquity of religion, and particularly to the antiquity of the connection between religion and war. As such it offers a striking testimony, from the Agnostic point of view, against the utter folly of wars of religion, which, from the very nature of the case, must generally be wars on behalf of mere speculative opinions. How could Abel possibly know that his offering was accepted by a supernatural being, or Cain that his was rejected? The Agnostic, the Rationalist, the man of common sense, where the said common sense is not depraved by faith and sanctification, all unite in saying that neither could know; and certainly we cannot know, we have no satisfactory evidence, that they knew. The incident testifies to this also—viz., that the ancient Hebrew ideal of religion consisted in devotion to some partial, because merely local and tribal, God; and, further, that it consisted in despising, hating, and subduing those of different race and faith, which, of course, would be a frequent, an almost constant, cause of war. The primitive legend of Cain and Abel strikes the keynote of religious war—a note which is heard with increasing loudness and increasing harshness as the development of the Hebrew race proceeds. The earlier portion of Genesis deals with the history of the human race, and the latter portion with the history of the Hebrews as a family and tribe. They do not claim descent from Abel, the murdered shepherd, but from his younger brother Seth, presumably of the same occupation. At length we reach that notable warrior, Sheikh Abraham, his somewhat milder son Isaac, and his crafty grandson, Jacob, or Israel. The Israelites left Canaan for Egypt as a family, and returned as a nation. In connection with their emigration to Egypt there is a passage which is in remarkable conformity with my interpretation of the Cain and Abel story. It is said that they first went down to Egypt as the poor relations of Joseph, who, by his sagacity and foresight, had become Grand Vizier to Pharaoh, Sultan of Egypt, and invited his brethren, notwithstanding that they had ill-used him and sold him thither, to share his prosperity. On their arrival, Joseph expressly instructs them that, in order to obtain the rich pasture-land of Goshen as their separate allotment, they should be careful to inform Pharaoh that they were shepherds, “for,” said he, “every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians.” This refers to the predatory attacks of the Arab tribes, in which, doubtless, the Hebrews might be included. These tribes envied the Egyptians the wealth and luxury of their superior civilisation, and often harassed them with their marauding assaults. It is likely enough that the Hebrews of Goshen returned to these bad habits, and became such a nuisance to the hospitable Egyptians that the latter, from sheer political necessity, were compelled to deprive them of their independence, and at the same

time, according to the custom of that age, they also deprived them of freedom. Russia offers a somewhat similar excuse for her conquest of the Central Asian tribes, as we see from Gortchakoff's historical circular to the Czar's ambassadors.

In time, however, the Hebrew fellaheen slaves had become sufficiently numerous to form a nation, and, under the capable leadership of Moses, they achieved their Exodus, or escape from Egypt. Whether they really took Canaan as their objective from the first, or whether that was an afterthought, as in their wanderings they approached its confines, we cannot say. Whether their desire to possess the "Promised Land" was mere greed of territory, a covetous longing for that goodly land, "a land flowing with milk and honey;" how far their wars were occasioned by mere race hatred; whether they were in any way superior in civilisation or in morals to the natives whom they sought to eject, I will not presume to decide. But this I must note, that from the very rise and beginning of their national life, down to the decline of their national prosperity, their history, on the showing of their own writers, is one long-continued illustration of the causal relation between religion and war. Every battle they fought is represented as having been fought by express command of Jehovah, at once their tribal god and king. Every success obtained is attributed to the divine favour, every reverse to the divine displeasure. Nay, even the dreadful cruelties and nameless horrors which usually followed their victories were practised under the same supreme authority; while sometimes they were divinely reproved and chastised for having been too lenient and humane. But man proved too strong for such a supernatural and unnatural power. The proposed extermination of the Canaanitish tribes was never accomplished. Perhaps the Israelites became satiated with slaughter, and milder feelings—the humanity that they had relinquished, the higher nature that they had too long repressed—resumed once more their proper sway. For, as the philosophic poet reminds us:—

"Naturam expellas furcâ, tamen usque recurret."

"You may turn Nature out of doors, but she'll find her way home again." Perhaps it may have been that the Hebrews found the natives too strong for them, as does happen to invaders sometimes. Indeed, the Book of Judges expressly states that this was so for some time after the death of Joshua, and that the Hebrews became subject to the King of Moab: and thus those who came to rule remained to serve. Eventually, after a long series of religious wars, the Hebrews became the dominant race. But, from the time of their first entry into Canaan, they more or less mingled with the indigenous tribes, and were influenced by their religions to such an extent that, as it was said of another conquest:—

"Graccia capta ferum victorem cepit, et artes intulit agresti Latio."

"Captive Greece captivated her uncultured conqueror, and introduced the arts to the rude Roman." So we may almost say that conquered Palestine revenged herself by seducing the Hebrews back to polytheistic idolatry, or the worship of Nature under various names and forms. Here comes in the natural reflection that conversions effected by force are always more apparent than real, more sudden than lasting, and that militant religious missions re-act fatally upon the religion of the missionaries themselves.

The zenith of Israel's greatness was attained under Solomon, whose very name means *peace*. From his warlike father, David, he had received the splendid heritage of a consolidated kingdom. This he preserved, and even extended, by wise policy, rather than by force of arms. This is worth noticing, as a set-off against the long and bloody record that precedes his reign. A better spirit was prevailing. Even David, at times, was ashamed of his homicidal career, and he is said to have ended his days with an expression of remorseful regret that, because he had been "a man of war," he was unworthy to build a temple to Jehovah. What an advance on the words of Miriam's song, "The Lord is a man of war"! What a contrast to David's own favourite expression, "The Lord of hosts"! Many of David's psalms are as bellicose as a modern Jingo; but sometimes he "will roar you as gently as any sucking dove"—*e.g.*, "I am for peace; but when I speak they are for war," and notably in "A Psalm for Solomon": "In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth."

In the time of Rehoboam, Solomon's foolish son and successor, the nation was split up by civil war into two hostile factions, which became the kingdom of Judah and the kingdom of Israel. This secession was also connected with religion. It is said to have been foretold in the reign of Solomon, as a punishment for the idolatry which he permitted and practised. This connection with religion was still further extended by Jeroboam, the successful rebel leader, who set up again the two calves of gold, which the nation had learnt to worship when in Egypt. Then followed, under several kings, a long series of wars, both civil and foreign, and eventually the King of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria; and in another century and a half Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, captured Jerusalem, and led away into captivity the best part of Judah and Benjamin.

Thenceforward the Jews were never strong enough to wage aggressive wars, religious or otherwise. They have sometimes defended themselves with splendid bravery, as in the brief and glorious period under the patriotic Maccabees, or in the dreadful siege of Jerusalem by Titus, or against the fierce attacks of Mohammed in Arabia. During the Middle

Ages they were subjected to most cruel persecutions in all Christian lands, as is the case to-day in Eastern Europe. But to all ill-treatment during the past thirteen hundred years they have offered only a passive resistance or a passive obedience and submission ; or they have heroically resolved to die together by the hands of each other rather than fall into the hands of brutal Christians. So perished the Jews of York in the reign of Richard I. Benjamin Disraeli, in one of his novels, reminds his compatriots that they ought not to forget that the suffering inflicted on them is a just retribution for the past deeds of their nation, which was the first in the history of the world to introduce the pernicious practice of persecuting for theological opinion !

J. ASHFORD JENKINSON.

(To be continued.)

A NOTEWORTHY NOVEL.*

THAT quality which Germans call *mannigfaltigkeit* is so uncommon, and the *odium theologicum* usually so strong, that a book written in the tolerant spirit and with the magnanimous impartiality of "We Two" is a rare treat. The hero is a Secularist leader, of noble character and stainless life; a "very strong man," proudly styled "the Chieftain" by his adoring followers. His public life is devoted to the propaganda of Atheism, and is consequently passed in desperately fighting, chiefly by litigation, against the virulent persecutions of all kinds, for which he is a mark; while in private life he was "a man of the gentlest tastes, as fond of his home as any man in England, a faithful friend, and a devoted father." His only daughter, Erica, a charming girl, with auburn hair and golden-brown eyes, and in character a delicious mixture of naiveté and common sense, is a kind of right-hand and secretary to her father: his "little son Eric," as he fondly calls her. But, about half-way through the book, the emotional side of her nature gains the upper hand, and in a touching scene she confesses that she has embraced Christianity. The graphic description of Luke Raeburn's struggle between pain and tenderness at this acknowledgment, the converse of his own to his father, is a scene showing vividly the author's power of sympathy, seeing that the book is written from the Christian point of view. That his daughter—his dearest treasure for three-and-twenty years—should be the cause of "bitter, hopeless, lifelong division" goes near to breaking the strong man's heart; but the loving fatherhood of his nature triumphs at last. "They were both of them brave and noble souls, and they loved each other; and so could get above the sadness." With the conversion—or perhaps we should say reversion—of Erica, however, the book sensibly weakens. There seems no good reason, except the author's will, for her change of creed. She studies the life of Christ with a too obvious determination to be convinced, and then, "all in a moment, the Christ who had been to her merely a noble character of ancient history seemed to become to her the most real and living of all living realities." From the moment, too, of this unlikely conversion the intellectual veil of Christianity seems to descend

* "We Two." A Novel. By Edna Lyall. (London: Hurst and Blackett.)

upon her spirit. Her sceptical disposition vanishes; she swallows difficulties, as it were, wholesale, and is soon ready to emulate the White Queen of looking-glass land, who was able, by dint of practice, to "believe six impossible things before breakfast." Erica falls, too, into the snare of an altruism carried to excess, and sacrificing the happiness of others as well as its own. In driving her lover from her side, apparently with the author's approbation, she shows to the unbiassed reader how her sense of just proportion has become obscured. It may, indeed, be true that in real life conversion to an ancient theology would be more likely to occur to a dogmatic Atheist professing to know—even though only to deny—the Unknowable, than to a mind trained in the calmer philosophy of Agnosticism. Be that as it may, it is to the author's credit that, when, at last, Luke Raeburn lies stricken down by the hand of a fanatic, there is no attempt at the impotent conclusion of a death-bed conversion. "I have tried always," he says—"yes, I think I may say always—to work entirely for the good of humanity; and when tormented by the impertinences of a most unpleasant specimen of a Christian—one of the lay-figures of the book—he replies calmly: "For thirty years I have lived as a Secularist, and have been perfectly content, notwithstanding that my life has been a very hard one. As a Secularist I now die content." On the whole, the chief surprise felt on closing "*We Two*" is that a mind so evidently candid, luminous, and penetrating as that of the author should be content to rest in the "*Sunset of the Dying Faith*" of Christianity.

WINIFRED ROBINSON.

NOTES AND SCRAPS.

FREETHOUGHT as represented by the organised Societies of this country is a miserable and pitiable thing. It wallows in vulgarity, deifies meanness, and eschews self-respect. At Freethought halls, with one or two noteworthy exceptions, there is a defiance of respectability, and to culture there is barely a pretence. Ever and anon, urged thereto by intense earnestness and high-minded resolves, scholars and thinkers are induced to speak from Freethought platforms, only to find that the *cléientele* at Secular halls is, in the aggregate, ill-educated and ill-bred. The lecturers, as a rule, are remunerated on a lower scale than the meanest Dissenting parson, and oftentimes even the wretched fee is offered with a pomposity and condescension which no self-respecting man could tolerate, and which are doubly offensive under the circumstances. If Freethought is to become a useful and powerful organisation, those who conduct the movement must raise the character of the meetings and insist on a fairer and more liberal treatment of its recognised public exponents.

It is no exaggeration to say that, during recent years, men who would have given character and repute to Freethought have withdrawn from the movement, mortified and disgusted at the shameful treatment to which they, as ministers of the Gospel of Man, have been subjected by the various Associations throughout the country. It is not unusual for a Society to engage a lecturer to speak three times on a Sunday, and to remunerate him with a sum which would barely pay for his railway fare !

If a man devote his life to the public advocacy of advanced views, he has a right to be fairly paid for his work ; and it is monstrous to imagine that men of education and of culture will give their time and talents to Freethought unless the means of subsistence be guaranteed to them.

Mr. Charles Watts will, before this reaches the majority of our readers, have sailed for the United States. His present tour is expected to extend over a considerable period. In his courageous and chivalrous propaganda Mr. Watts has, we are confident, the best wishes of his numerous English admirers. He is, against desperate odds, struggling, so far as one man can, for the world's intellectual and moral emancipation, and those who know him best can testify to his thorough earnestness, his whole-souled fidelity, and his almost incomparable ability as a Freethought propagandist.

There are doubtless those who, with a vivid recollection of John Stuart Mill's eloquent impeachment on Nature (*vide* "Three Essays on Religion"), sometimes question whether she always works inside the boundaries of law. "Nature," they urge with this clear-sighted thinker, "impales men, breaks them as if on a wheel, casts them to be devoured by wild beasts, burns them to death, crushes them with stones, starves them with hunger, freezes them with cold.....She mows down those on whose existence hangs the well-being of a whole people.....with as little compunction as those whose death is a relief to themselves, or a blessing to those under their noxious influence.....A single hurricane destroys the hope of a season; a flight of locusts, or an inundation, desolates a district.....The waves of the sea, like banditti, seize and appropriate the wealth of the rich and the little all of the poor with the same accompaniments.....Nature has Nayodes more fatal than those of Carrier; her explosions of fire-damp are as destructive as human artillery; her plague and cholera far surpass the poison cups of the Borgias." All this is very terse and very true. For why does Nature burn men with fire now, as she did thousands of years ago? Because the law of heat never changes. Why does she still crush them with stones? Because the law of gravitation is unalterable. Why does she mow down with perfect indifference prince and pauper, old and young, giants and dwarfs? Because she is no respecter of persons. Why does Nature poison men with plague and kill them with cholera? Because the laws of sanitation are inexorable. So we see that, always and everywhere, Nature's workings, from the minutest to the mightiest, conform to law. Whether she desolates a district with locusts or clothes an island with verdure—whether her hurricane fills a people with fear or her sunshine with hope—she does it by invariable law.

"G. M. McC.," who, our readers will be pleased to hear, is slowly progressing towards convalescence, will contribute a special paper to our forthcoming issue.

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All communications should be addressed—EDITOR of THE AGNOSTIC, 17, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, London.

The Agnostic:

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF LIBERAL THOUGHT.

"The power which the universe manifests to us is utterly inscrutable."—HERBERT SPENCER.

"Agnosticism simply means that a man shall not say he knows or believes that which he has no scientific grounds for professing to know or believe.....Agnosticism says that we know no hing of what may be beyond phenomena."—PROF. HUXLEY.

"I think that generally (and more and more as I grow older), but not always, an Agnostic would be the more correct description of my state of mind."—CHARLES DARWIN.

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SIXPENCE.

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THE AGNOSTIC.

OCTOBER, 1885.

AGNOSTICISM AND THE MASSES.

PERHAPS Christian apologists have never such a plausible case to argue, or one so likely to win the popular ear, as when they undertake to maintain the superiority of their religion over Agnosticism because of its greater power of appeal to the degraded and the poor. It has been a chief characteristic of that type of nature whereof Christianity itself is one of the manifestations, to feel for what are called "the masses" a degree of sympathy which at length threatens to overleap all reasonable bounds. Philanthropy is an excellent thing; but in these days its rewards are so immediate that oftentimes it comes perilously nigh playing to the ears of the groundlings. And, while conceding to the sentiment of humanity all that can fairly be reckoned its due, we ought not to suffer any invasion of the high-ground of religious truth by that mere sentimentalism which in politics is fast transforming the ancient party of justice into the canting advocate of wrong.

We are confronted, then, with a system which proclaims itself, in a special manner, the faith of the poor and ignorant—a system whose boast it is that it speaks as no other can to the criminal and the depraved; that its teachings are plain to the untutored intellect, and its ceremonies grateful to men of rude emotion; that the hope it kindles and the terror it inspires are unfailing with those who have no hope of man and no wholesome fear of him. We are shown the words of one who spake in gentleness as seldom man spake—words in themselves inexpressibly touching, and now heavy laden with the added aroma of nigh two thousand years of faith. We are bade think of all the dim understandings that Christianity has enlightened, of all the weary lives it has cheered, of all the dark bedsides it has made radiant. And then we are asked in triumph, Can you offer us anything half so good as that? Can your First Principles fill up to the unreasoning rustic

the place of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John? Will you palm off upon the poor cottager your jargon about infinite and eternal energies for those simple phrases wherein she now reads her title to a treasure in the skies? Can you transform the criminal's remorse by pointing him to the Unknowable, or baptise Maories and Hottentots in the name of an anonymous impersonal force? And then we are reminded that it is no new thing for those to spurn Christ's teaching who are wise in their own conceits. That was foretold from the beginning, and the prophecy has had fulfilment over and over again. "Not many wise, not many noble," were to be of the elect. In the earliest ages of the Church the fervency of devout slaves and women stands out in marked contrast to the indifference of Pliny and the persecuting enmity of Antonine. Christianity may have been powerless in the schools of Athens and Alexandria; it may have had no word of persuasion for Hypatia or for Proclus; but it is its special glory that it was welcomed by the hordes of Alaric, and that it prevailed with Clovis the Frank. And as then to Stoics and Neo-Platonists, so now to synthetic philosophers, the preaching of the Cross may be foolishness; but still Christianity will make its appeal, and shall find its welcome, in the great unphilosophic heart of man.

Now, divested of all rhetoric, this argument is simply an assertion that Christianity is a better religion than Agnosticism, because it is, and has been, a far more popular faith than the other—in our time at least—is likely to be. It is not an impugning of the basis of our system; it does not even pretend to show that any belief held by Agnostics is a false one, nor yet to demonstrate that any article of the thousand creeds of Christendom is true. It is neither more nor less than a declaration that the old faith is infinitely more welcome than the new philosophy to certain types of nature confessedly far from perfect. It is an appeal to the test, not of principles, but of a show of hands; and, when narrowly considered, it will be found to have the curious implication that that religion is the highest which can appeal most forcibly to the lowest minds.

Of course, when stated thus broadly, such an argument is discovered at first hearing to be utterly absurd. We do not expect men of low nature to find gratification in the same things with which men of higher development are pleased. From a Dyak or a Bushman we should not look for appreciation of Beethoven's Symphonies or Shakespeare's plays. A Dorsetshire ploughman is not considered the best judge of Corot. Nobody expects Bill Sykes to take delight in anything better than music-hall ditties and the Police News. And can it be that men who, in everything else, choose the lowest types, will, in this one instance—this of religion—be drawn with irresistible fascination to the highest? The

thing is a physiological impossibility. By the fundamental laws of life a base nature cannot have any discernment of lofty truth or any sympathy with high emotions. The religion of a savage must be barbarous like himself; the faith of a criminal must be anti-social; and when we find any system which makes converts among cannibals and murderers we may be sure that it does so because its doctrines are little higher than the creeds which they supplant.

Perhaps, however, we shall be told that this is a fine theory, but that it is disproved by notorious facts. Christianity, it will be said, ruins all our reasonings, for it happens to be the faith not only of barbarians, but also of the peoples most highly civilised. It is doubtless very clever to talk about congruity of cerebration and the equilibrium of being; but here is a religion which suits with every nature—a religion which, ever the same, is yet not too high for the savage and the malefactor, and not too low for intellects like that of Newton, and for sympathies like those of St. Vincent de Paul. The answer to this is easy. We deny that it is the same religion which satisfies these widely-different minds. Men talk of Christendom and Christianity, and in such broad terms they include all grades of humanity, from Malays up to Englishmen, and all varieties of religion, from Fetishism up to belief in a power which has been almost divested of the last anthropomorphic taint. They forget that the Christian faith is not one and invariable, but that its phases are as countless as the men who profess it; that, on the one hand, it touches the creed of "Literature and Dogma," and, on the other, the primitive worship of ghosts. Within the limits of the Christian Church—within the bounds even of one of its many sections—there exist diversities of worship and of religious nature quite as great as any that separate Christianity from avowedly Pagan faiths. A Calabrian peasant has more affinity with Indian Sudras than with Cardinal Newman or the present Pope. A negro Methodist preacher is much more nearly akin to the African rain-maker than to Dr. Henry Ward Beecher of Brooklyn. General Booth yelling about "the blood," Mr. Moody performing his wholesale-conversion trick, are mere medicine-men and idolatrous jugglers, compared with the latitudinarian vicar whose sermons have much more in them of Matthew Arnold than of the Apostle Paul.

Now, in popular arguments for Christianity all this is lost sight of, and the religion believed in (not that professed) by the civilised and educated part of Christendom is in no way distinguished from that held by the barbarous and the unlettered. Yet the distinction is a most important one, and one that, in a more or less marked form, has always been maintained. In mediæval times, even, the religion of Roger Bacon was a very different thing from that of La Here the mer-

cenary and Gurth the swineherd. And, now-a-days, with growing enlightenment, the faith of the cultured classes has come to be little more than morality touched with emotion, while popular Christianity—the faith of Revivalists and Salvation Army captains—is still to a large extent the old religion of sacrifice and propitiation. And here we touch the root of the matter. It is the Atonement theory, the scheme of redemption by the merits and the blood of Christ, that gives to Christianity its peculiar power over barbarous races and vicious and ignorant man. Popular Christianity, indeed, is the sublimation of human sacrifice; the mass is nothing more than a refinement of those fearful holocausts which defile so many primitive faiths. A really high religion, one that asked its converts to give up the conception of sacrifice, and in their thoughts to divest the Unknowable of all likeness to a bloodthirsty and vindictive chief, would have absolutely no chance of a hearing with the greater part of mankind. And it is simply because Christianity demands so much less than this—because it requires men not to give up their old beliefs, but only slightly to change them—that it has had so popular and so wide a reign.

But, if this argument be a sound one, what chance have we Agnostics of immediate success in proselytising among the masses of mankind? It seems to me—and the fact had better be stated frankly—that we have very little chance indeed. In our dilemma there are but two alternatives: either our philosophy must spread among the masses by its own debasement, or, if it be a high faith, and we be resolved that it shall not degrade itself, then, in the present condition of humanity, it must be content with an audience that is fit but few. Human life is yet turbulent and distorted; its currents run all opposite and athwart, and it is not in the power always of any navigator, however skilful, to sail at once with the tepid flood of popularity and with the cold, clear stream of truth. We must make our choice of courses; and, without regret or hesitation, we must decide for what, in our eyes, is the true and the noble faith. In choosing thus, no doubt, we place ourselves on an altitude whence our words will come faint and powerless to those who dwell in the low valleys and crouch in dens underground. We shall, for long years at least, have no overflowing congregation and no loud applause. We must resign the purer pleasure of seeing simplicity kindle at our teachings and humble grief assuaged by comfort at our hands. We must oftentimes forego what will seem opportunities, hardly to be passed over, of doing timely good. The malefactor's cell, the peasant's death-chamber, the savage kraal, we must bear to see closed against us, for in them we can speak no true word which will bring any light. In a word, we must be content to have no share, or almost none, in the work of elementary civilisation. Yet let no one

think that, therefore, that work will be inadequately performed. Nature is not straitened in her choice of ministers, and she knows always to fit the organ to the function. She does not choose fine instruments for underwork. The first bringing of man into the social state was wrought by agents which, to us, seem horrible—by cannibalism, by slavery, and by war. And so now the uplifting of the masses is, perhaps, too coarse a task for our philosophy, and may possibly be reserved for a dogmatic Atheism or for the faith which seems to have entwined itself almost inextricably with the semi-civilisation of Europe. But with these possibilities we have nothing to do. No man can tell what the issues of his action will be, or what results may follow the words he utters. One thing only he can be sure of—that his acts are right ones and that his words are true. We believe in the truth of our philosophy, and therefore, though it were fated that never any one should accept it, our duty would be none the less to preach it and spread it abroad. “Not as adventitious will the wise man regard the faith that is in him, not as something which may be slighted and made subordinate to calculations of policy, but as the supreme authority to which all his actions should bend. The highest truth conceivable by him he will fearlessly utter ; and will endeavour to get embodied in fact his purest idealism ; knowing that, let what may come of it, he is thus playing his appointed part in the world—knowing that, if he can get done the thing he aims at—well ; if not—well also, though not *so* well.”

ROBERT AITKEN

THE PHILOSOPHY OF EPICURUS AND MODERN AGNOSTICISM.*

(Concluded.)

THE early life of Epicurus, we are told, had been full of terrors. His fear of spirits, demons, goblins, and avenging deities, injudiciously fostered by his mother, had been extreme. He lived in an agony of terror of the unseen (Batteux iv., p. 284). In his later years he sought to put all these terrors under his feet by endeavouring to prove that we know nothing of any spiritual world; that the deities take no cognizance of human affairs; that there is no life for the soul after death—that is, no individual consciousness; and his disciples shouted for joy at his demonstrations, and proclaimed his victory over superstition. “Of what advantage is it to Diaginas,” he asked, “that there is somewhere a Being infinitely great and good, when Diaginas and every one else perceives that this infinitely great and good Being does not redress or prevent injustice? The daughter of Pollias, the herdsman, was made a slave by the rich Crysippus, contrary to all law and justice, and amid the weeping and wailing of all the relatives of the damsel; but the infinitely great and good Being of Diaginas did nothing to prevent the outrage. And our sacrificers, what are they but cooks and butchers? Who ever saw an evil prevented or a good attained by sacrifice?” (Maxims i. 14). And again—

“We attribute to the deities our own passions of love, hate, enmity, revenge, and desire. Who ever saw these feelings operating in the gods, or felt the gods interfering in human affairs in consequence? All around us is a pervading fate that we cannot alter or avert, an order of nature unfeeling and implacable, unmoved by prayers, by calamity, or by injustice.”

Matter and space are all we know, and matter is made up of atoms, our souls as well as our bodies; but how thought, memory, reasoning, and conscience come from atoms he evidently does not understand, and does not attempt to explain. The modern Agnostic teaches a similar doctrine, but pretends to explain it by telling us that

* A paper read before the Royal Society of Literature on June 24th, 1885; Sir Patrick de Colquhoun, Q.C., in the Chair.

thought is a secretion of the brain, as bile is of the liver—pretension all. Nor is Epicurus less complimentary to virtue than the Agnostic. In his thirty-eighth Maxim he assures us that virtue is necessary to happiness, because vice leads to fear—fear of loss of honour, of impending calamity, of misfortune in some shape or other. Thus present pleasure may be purchased too dearly by future evil. But virtue holds its head aloft and fears no consequences.

The pleasure, which was the supreme blessing of life, was only to be obtained, according to our philosopher, by *φρόνησις*, by right living, by prudence, health of mind and body, and a wise conduct of life. Fears for the future and regrets for the past make many men miserable. To many, death is a happy release, a blissful repose after life's fitful fever—an eternity of peace.

Schopenhauer, the Buddhist philosopher of Germany—often called “the Epicurean”—agreed with Epicurus in several of his tenets. But there was a marked contrast between the two. Epicurus was an Optimist and a Materialist; Schopenhauer a Pessimist and an Idealist. Epicurus was sunny-tempered, bland, and humane; Schopenhauer was a cynic and a malcontent. Epicurus gathered his disciples around him in a pleasant garden, and invited the world to partake of his cheer; Schopenhauer shut himself up in a German *Studirzimmer*, and taught the renunciation of the will as the true road to happiness. Epicurus lived abstemiously, teaching that pleasure and its pursuit were man's chief end in life. The German philosopher lived daintily, if not luxuriously, and taught that man was doomed to misery.

No, it is not with Schopenhauer that Epicurus agrees, but with the modern Agnostics.

Hume, in his “Natural History of Religion,” says:—“The whole is a riddle, an enigma, an inexplicable mystery. Doubt, uncertainty, suspense of judgment appear to be the only result of our most accurate scrutiny concerning this subject.”

“The writers on Natural Theology,” says Mill, in one of his “Essays on Religion,” “have entirely lost their way. They have exhausted all the resources of sophistry to make it appear that all the suffering in the world exists only to prevent greater—a thesis that can have no application whatever to a creator assumed to be omnipotent.”

“The Epicureans were right in contending that pleasure, in its ultimate sense, was the true aim of mankind,” says the author of “Shadows of the Coming Truth” (p. 215). And again: “It is plain that pleasure and pain must have been powerful instruments in the development of the species, and that they are still, under more refined conditions, the real motives of all human actions. The true motive of all that we do in life would appear to be to attain to conditions which we believe to be

attended with ultimate pleasure, and an immunity from its opposite" (p. 184). This is Epicureanism as I understand it.

In the appendix to that repertory of Oriental lore, Mr. C. J. Stone's "Cradle Land of Arts and Creeds," the Agnostics of our own day are thus described: "Of those nominally within the Church's folds, increasing numbers seem of late years to have rejected any idea of life beyond the present. They consider that the *ego*, the *I am*, the *I think*, is simply created out of and dependent upon the body, the one body." And again: "The European science of our age, in great part, says—No, your soul, your thinking process, your *I am*, is of the body only. It is of the brain and nerves, the stomach and blood. In moments of excitement the mind may seem to command the body, to urge the enfeebled limbs or jaded brain to renewed exertion; but the stomach or other material organ will be found to be at the bottom of it." And this is Materialism, or Agnosticism, as I understand it.

Mr. Balfour, in his "Defence of Philosophic Doubt," argues in the same way as Epicurus relative to our sensations and our aspirations.

Dr. Bithell, in his "Creed of a Modern Agnostic," distinguishes between absolute and relative truth precisely as Epicurus does, and arrives at the same conclusion, that all our knowledge is limited and relative, and that absolute truth is unattainable by man. But of practical truth we can attain to a large amount, sufficient for our guidance in life, and these practical truths we know as certainly as we are interested in knowing anything, he adds.

"Scepticism is the highest of duties," writes a modern philosopher* of eminence; "blind faith is the one unpardonable sin. It cannot be otherwise, for every great advance in natural knowledge has involved the absolute rejection of authority, the cherishing of the keenest scepticism, the annihilation of the spirit of blind faith; and the most ardent votary of science holds his firmest convictions, not because the men he most venerates hold them; not because their verity is testified by portents and wonders; but because his experience teaches him that whenever he chooses to bring these convictions into contact with their primary source—Nature; whenever he thinks fit to test them, by appealing to experiment and observation—Nature will confirm them."

"I am prepared to go with the Materialists so far," the same philosopher admits (p. 339), "and I am glad on all occasions to declare my belief that their fearless development of the Materialistic aspect of things has had an immense and most beneficial influence upon physiology and psychology. Nay, more, when they go farther than I think they are entitled to do, when they introduce Calvinism into science, and

* Huxley's "Lay Sermons," p. 18.

declare that man is nothing but a machine, I do not see any particular harm in these doctrines, so long as they admit that which is a matter of experimental fact—namely, that it is a machine capable of adjusting itself within certain limits.”

“Modern civilisation rests upon physical science,” says the same philosopher. And yet again: “The whole of modern thought is steeped in science.” These are precisely the results which Epicurus desired; but natural science was not sufficiently advanced in his day to enable him to bring his desires to fruition.

The account given us by the Agnosticism of the present day relative to the cruelty of Nature, and its indifference to human nature and to human suffering, is precisely that given by Epicurus twenty-two centuries ago. “Nature impales men,” says John Stuart Mill in his “*Essays on Religion*” (page 99)—“Nature impales men, breaks them as if on the wheel, casts them to be devoured by wild beasts, burns them often to death, crushes them to death with stones, starves them with hunger, freezes them with cold, poisons them by the quick or slow venom of her exhalations, such as the ingenious cruelty of a Nabis or a Domitian never surpassed. All this Nature does with the most supercilious disregard both of mercy and justice, emptying her shafts upon the best and noblest indifferently with the meanest and the worst—upon those engaged in the highest and worthiest enterprises, and often as the direct consequences of the noblest acts, and, it might almost be imagined, as a punishment for them. She mows down those on whose existence hangs the well-being of a whole people—perhaps the prospects of the human race for generations to come—with as little compunction as those whose death is a relief to themselves or a blessing to those under their noxious influence. Such are Nature’s dealings with life.”

These things are not what a wise and good man would allow, argued Epicurus of old, as the Agnostics argue now, if he possessed the power to avert or prevent them. Thus the origin of evil is the stumbling-block that leads both to the same conclusion—the denial of a Supreme Being, infinitely powerful, wise, and good. The Buddhists argue very much in the same way.

“The intelligent efforts of wise and good men are to be devoted,” says Dr. Bithell, in his “*Creed of a Modern Agnostic*,” “first, to teaching man how to modify and alter his surroundings; secondly, how to choose the best if he cannot alter them; and, thirdly, how best to adapt himself to the inevitable.” This was the practical philosophy which Epicurus delighted to teach.

The following are some of the conclusions of Dr. Bithell (p. 140):—

“Every sentient being is conscious, at different times, of two modes

of existences : one of which it likes, chooses, or prefers ; the other of which it dislikes, and, if possible, avoids.

" If it succeeds in obtaining that which it prefers, the result is satisfaction—a term which seems less open to objection than that of happiness or pleasure.

" In order to obtain this satisfaction, one must have the means of gratifying certain instincts, desires, emotions, sentiments ; and morality consists essentially in gratifying them in such a way as to interfere as little as possible with other individuals in their efforts to gratify theirs."

In all this we have essentially the teaching of Epicurus. What he called "pleasure" our modern Agnostics call "satisfaction." The aim of life is the same, and the means of attaining that aim similar. The modern Agnostic, says Dr. Bithell, will not pretend to know what is not and cannot be known.

In conclusion, Epicurean philosophy and modern Agnosticism agree in the following remarkable points :—

1. A belief in the atomic theory.
2. Materialism.
3. The knowable with respect to man is limited to this life ; all that relates to the spiritual world belongs to the unknowable.
4. A Deity is possible, but unknown, and certainly without interference in the affairs of this life.
5. A soul and immortality possible, but unknowable and improbable.
6. A future state of rewards and punishments rejected altogether.

I come, therefore, to the conclusion that the Agnosticism of to-day is but the philosophy of Epicurus in a modern dress.

WILLIAM KNIGHTON, LL.D.

THE GOD IDEA.

SIXTH PAPER.

THIS concludes the examination of the old sun-myth religions ; but there are yet three very important religious systems to be dealt with—viz., Confucianism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity.

Confucianism took its birth in the sixth century B.C., at a time when the old solar myth was very extensively believed in China and the neighbouring countries, and was, strictly speaking, a system of morality and conduct. Its author, Confucius (Kong-fu-tse), was born B.C. 550, in Lu, a province of China, and at a very early age commenced to preach a higher and purer morality among the Chinese people, many of whom became regular followers of the young reformer, and followed his good example by likewise teaching the people at every favourable opportunity. He was strongly opposed to all false show, hypocrisy, and deceit, and abhorred the life of a hermit as unnatural and mischievous. He preferred not to speak of heaven as a personal being, as was the habit of his countrymen, but was exceedingly fond of quoting its example as the preserver of order, frequently alluding to its commands, ordinances, and purposes. He attached no value to prayer, preached the doctrine that good and evil are rewarded on the earth by prosperity and adversity, and expressed his disbelief in special revelations to men. The canonical books of the Confucians are known as the five *Kings* (the historical *Shu-King*, the psalms of the *Shi-King*, and the ritual of the *Li-ki*, the chronicles of the *Tshun-tsiu*, and the magical *Yi-King*), and the three volumes containing the remarkable and benevolent utterances of the master Confucius himself—viz., the *Lun-yu*, the *Ta-hio*, and the *Tshung-yung*. In the *Ta-hio* occur those celebrated and beautiful moral passages which have so justly immortalised the name of Confucius. The one is the 24th moral : “Do unto another what you would he should do to you, and do not to another what you would should not be done to you. Thou needest this law alone ; it is the foundation and principle of all the rest.” The other is the 53rd moral : “Acknowledge thy benefits by return of other benefits, but never avenge injuries.” Notwithstanding the great persecution of Confucians in B.C. 212, by the Ts’in rulers, and other smaller attempts to destroy the new system

of morality in favour of the sun-gods, the moral code of Confucius was publicly permitted to be used in A.D. 57, and since the seventh century has almost entirely taken the place of god-worship, a few only of the more uneducated classes still professing to worship Fo-hi.

Mohammedanism, or Islamism, the reformed faith of Arab polytheists, arose in the sixth century of our era. Mahomet, or Mohammed, was a young religious enthusiast, a camel-driver of Mecca, who determined to uproot the idolatry and superstition of the Arab tribes, and was singularly successful in his arduous undertaking. He had a powerful aversion to all kinds of priestcraft, sacrifices, and superstitious ordeals, and boldly preached the unity of God, declaring that "there is but one God, and Mahomet is his prophet." Of all the religions of the world, perhaps none has been more successful than this; and, certainly, not one ever spread so rapidly over the face of the earth. In less than 100 years after the decease of the prophet the Khalifs of Islamism were masters of the whole of Northern Africa, Spain, and part of France, besides a great portion of Asia; which vast territories they retained possession of for about 600 years, encouraging the while philosophical and scientific studies, establishing libraries, schools, and universities, and otherwise benefitting the human race. At the present day upwards of 100,000,000 people embrace this faith, whose God is Allah, the great unity, whose prophet is Mahomet, and whose Bible is the Koran.

We now come to Christianity, that widely-spread faith, whose cradle was Alexandria, whose nursery was Rome, and whose workshop was Europe. The founder of this religion, if he ever lived at all, about which there is considerable doubt, was a young ascetic monk belonging to the Essenes—a Syrian branch of the large order of Therapeutæ—whose headquarters were in Alexandria. His name was Yahoshua ben Pandira and Stada; he was born about B.C. 120, in the reign of Alexander Jannæus; and he preached the doctrines of Confucius, declaring publicly that the priests were liars and hypocrites, and inculcating communistic and socialistic theories. He gained many lowly followers, who followed him about preaching in the open air, and begging their bread from day to day, and, at last, was publicly executed for his seditious conduct.

At the same time a remarkable mental revolution was taking place in Greece and Egypt, the natural homes of mythology; the University of Alexandria and the Academic Groves of Athens were fast sending to the right-about-face the old superstitions, much to the dismay of the priests and religious fanatics, who were driven to their wits' end to know how to counteract this dangerous tendency of the age towards infidelity and science. The idea struck them of utilising for their purpose the

new sect of religious reformers, who lived according to the teaching of the young socialist, Yahoshua ; they boldly declared that this man was, when on earth, an incarnate deity, and proceeded to attribute to him all the miraculous performances that had been previously imputed to the sun-god Bacchus ; and commenced forthwith to prepare their documentary evidences ready for the ignorant and credulous multitudes. A new sect of the Therapeut monks of Alexandria came into existence, called Eclectics, whose mission was to collect all that was good and useful in the religions of their neighbours, and commit them to manuscript for the use of their monasteries and the priestly class generally. It did not take long to fabricate a very imposing story of the young man Yahoshua, whom they now called Iesous (Ἰησοῦς, a name used by the Greeks to signify a hero personification of the sun-god Bacchus, the Phœnician Ἰης), Greek being at that time the prevailing language of Lower Egypt. The performances of the ancient sun-gods of Egypt, Persia, Arabia, India, Greece, Phœnicia, and Italy were recalled to the minds of these Eclectic monks, by diligent search among their old musty MSS., and, after carefully and judiciously collating the fables, they were enabled to clothe their new Iesous, or Jesus, with all the leading characteristics of these various deities. He was born of a virgin at midnight between December 24th and December 25th, as were all the sun-gods : his birth, like that of Mithra and that of Krishna, was foretold : a star pointed out the place of his nativity, as in the case of Mithra : his birth-place was a manger in a stable, as in the case of Hercules ; or, according to another account, a cave, as in the case of Mithra and Horus : he cured the sick, as did Æsculapius : he fasted in the wilderness, as did Buddha : he performed miracles, as did Bacchus, Hercules, and others : he turned water into wine, as did the Egyptain Bacchus, and as was done at the Bacchanalian orgies : he was crucified, as were also Krishna, Osiris, and Prometheus : he rose from the dead after having been in the grave three days and three nights, as did all the sun-gods : he descended to hell, as did all the sun-gods : he was called Saviour (Σωτήρ, Gr., and Saotès, Egyp.) and Lamb of God (*Agnus Dei*), as were all the sun-gods (Ζεὺς Σωτήρ, Mises Saotès, etc.) ; Amen, as was Jupiter Ammon (Ζεὺς Ἀμὴν) ; Christ, or the Anointed (χριστός), as was Osiris ; Son of God, as were Plato's Logos (λόγος), Bacchus, Mithra, and Horus ; Holy Word (of Plato and Philo), as also was Horus ; God of Love, as were Adonis, Mithra, and Krishna ; Light of the World, as were all the sun-gods ; and, like his *alter ego*, Krishna, The Resurrection, The Incarnate, The Beginning and the End, Existing before All Things, Chief of Prophets, and Messenger of Peace : he was the incarnation of one third of a trinity, as were also Horus, Krishna, and Plato's Logos : his day was called the Day of the Sun : his

followers were called Christians, and his priests Bishops of Christ just as were those of Osiris: his priests absolved sins, received confessions, and practised celibacy, as did the priests of Bacchus, Adonis, Mithra, Krishna, Buddha, etc.: his feast was called the Lord's Supper and the Mystery of the Night, as were those of Bacchus, Adonis, and Osiris: these suppers became, in course of time, obscene midnight orgies, as did those of Bacchus and Adonis: at these suppers the insignia over the table were the letters I H X̄ (the Phœnician name of Bacchus, in Greek capitals), surrounded by the rays of light and surmounted by a crucifix and a bleeding lamb, precisely as was the case with the Bacchanalian orgies: at the Lord's Supper bread and wine were transubstantiated into the body and blood of Jesus, exactly as was done in the case of Bacchus and Osiris: and lights were used at these feasts just as they were at the Bacchanalian orgies.

These fables were carefully compiled together, attributed to various imaginary authors, and finally issued to the people as an appendix, or New Testament, to the volume of the old Jewish Scriptures, or Old Testament. Thus were gathered together by the Alexandrian Eclectics the principal essentials of all the old mythological cults, and thus came into existence the huge and powerful system of religion called Christianity, which has been the great curse of Europe for well nigh two thousand years. From the brutal murder of Hypatia, in a Christian church, by the fanatical mob of a Christian bishop, down to the last poor wretch burnt alive at the stake by the orders of the Church of Jesus, the story of Christian infamy is not relieved by one bright spot. Humanity stands aghast, and shudders at the hideous tale of crime which the history of Christian Europe unfolds. It is one long wail of anguish, poured forth by suffering man, finding relief only in the silence of the grave—that stronghold of peace within which neither god, devil, priest, nor tyrant can wreak their diabolical vengeance further. How terrible have been the sufferings of poor Humanity under the ghastly shadow of the Cross is beautifully expressed in Shelley's "Queen Mab," in the dialogue between the spirit of Ianthe and the Fairy Queen:—

SPIRIT. I was an infant when my mother went
 To see an Atheist burned. She took me there :
 The dark-robed priests were met around the pile
 The multitude was gazing silently ;
 And as the culprit passed with dauntless mien,
 Tempered disdain in his unaltering eye,
 Mixed with a quiet smile, shone calmly forth :
 The thirsty fire crept round his manly limbs ;
 His resolute eyes were scorched to blindness soon ;
 His death-pang rent my heart ! the insensate mob

Uttered a cry of triumph, and I wept.
Weep not, child ! cried my mother, for that man
Has said, There is no God.

FAIRY.

There is no God !

Nature confirms the faith his death-groan seal'd :
Let heaven and earth, let man's revolving race,
His ceaseless generations, tell their tale ;
Let every part depending on the chain
That links it to the whole, point to the hand
That grasps its term ! Let every seed that falls,
In silent eloquence unfold its store
Of argument : infinity within,
Infinity without, belie creation ;
The exterminable spirit it contains
Is Nature's only God ; but human pride
Is skilful to invent most serious names
To hide its ignorance.

The name of God

Has fenced about all crime with holiness,
Himself the creature of his worshippers,
Whose names and attributes and passions change,
Seeva, Buddh, Foh, Jehovah, God, or Lord,
Even with the human dupes who build his shrines,
Still serving o'er the war-polluted world
For desolation's watchword ; whether hosts
Stain his death-blushing chariot wheels, as on
Triumphantly they roll, whilst Brahmins raise
A sacred hymn to mingle with the groans ;
Or countless partners of his power divide
His tyranny to weakness ; or the smoke
Of burning towns, the cries of female helplessness,
Unarmed old age, and youth, and infancy,
Horribly massacred, ascend to heaven
In honour of his name ; or, last and worst,
Earth groans beneath religion's iron age,
And priests dare babble of a God of peace,
Even while their hands are red with guiltless blood,
Murdering the while, uprooting every germ
Of truth, exterminating, spoiling all,
Making the earth a slaughter-house !

There is no God ! What, then, caused this mighty universe ? To be caused implies a cause, certainly ; and that cause must, in the very nature of things, be adequate for the production of the effect manifested. But, inasmuch as cause and effect are but relative terms, the cause could not exist independently of the effect, and *vice versa*. Therefore, as far as the human mind is capable of mentating, the universe could not have been caused. It is, therefore, eternal. What that inherent power of matter is that hides itself so mysteriously behind the pheno-

mena of nature we cannot tell, further than that, being the inherent property of eternal matter, it also is eternal. This point is the limit of the human understanding, beyond which it is apparently impossible at present for the mind of man to soar. In the words of Mr. Herbert Spencer, "there is a power behind humanity and behind all things ; a power of which humanity is but a small and fugitive product ; a power which was, in the course of ever-changing manifestations, before humanity was, and will continue through all other manifestations when humanity has ceased to be." This power, of which matter and motion, thought and volition, are but the phenomenal manifestations, and which regulates the varied movements of those myriads of stellar systems interspersed throughout the infinity of space—this exhaustless power of life and energy is to the human mind, as at present constituted, unknowable. Call it Law ; call it Gravity ; call it the Mysterious Unknown ; but call it not God, that word which has brought so much bitter anguish to humanity, and which blighted the beauty of nature, causing hate where love should be, and tears to fall where smiles should gladden the heart of man. Whether or not the mind of man in future ages will be able to lift the veil that at present lies between him and the Great Unknown time alone can tell.

At present we are at the mercy of an imperfectly-developed nervous organisation, with its five special senses, which, though very far superior to the lowly nervous development of our remote ancestors of millions of centuries back in the history of life, is perfectly inadequate for the solution of the great problem of existence. But a time will probably arrive in the dim and misty future when other and more important senses will be evolved within the human frame, which may bring man nearer the elucidation of this greatest of all mysteries. Meanwhile let us apply ourselves boldly to the uprooting of the old Upas tree of religious faith—that pernicious development of the god-idea that has been the constant blight of all ages, stifling reason by fostering blind faith and gross credulity, robbing the race of all that is noble, manly, and honest, by the propagation of those canker worms, hypocrisy and cant, and retarding the temporal salvation of man by the substitution of the vain and foolish theory of future rewards and punishments.

HERBERT JUNIUS HARDWICKE, M.D., F.R.C.S.

EVOLUTION AND SPECIAL CREATION.

FIRST PAPER.

THE term Evolution has come much to the front in recent times. It is now employed not only by scientific men and philosophers in learned treatises and books intended for the perusal of persons of advanced education, but it is also used in magazine articles, popular journals, and newspapers, the readers of which are found among ordinary people, laying claim to no special education, and endowed with no very brilliant attainments. Probably the word is used with no very definite meaning attached to it, and still more frequently a wrong idea is associated with it ; but the fact that it is mentioned at all by such persons as now employ it shows what a marvellous change has taken place in public opinion within the last ten or fifteen years. For whenever the word is cited there is connected with it some kind of a notion in which the alleged supernatural plays no part, and in which material forces and natural laws are supposed to do that which, at one time, almost every one considered a Deity alone could perform. No doubt there are many religious people who profess to believe in Evolution, and who maintain that it is what they term God's mode of working ; and there are some, indeed, who go so far as to say that the power and wisdom of God are seen more thoroughly displayed in the process of Evolution than in the method so long believed in of special and supernatural creation. But the number of these is comparatively small, and, consequently, the great mass of those who accept the word in its legitimate signification may be looked upon as of a sceptical turn of mind. In this respect there has been immense progress made during the present generation. My present object will be, after explaining what the word Evolution really means, and pointing out the natural process which it sets forth, to show how those laws and forces, which we see at work everywhere around us, have, in the course of ages, brought about the present state of things and moulded Nature into her present form.

The true definition of the word Evolution is an unfolding, opening out, or unwinding ; a disclosure of something which was not previously known, but which existed before in a more condensed or hidden form. The simplest illustration of it is the unwinding of a long thread of

cotton from a reel. There is, therefore, no new existence called into being, but a making conspicuous to our eyes that which was previously concealed. Evolution, then, is that which unfolds itself, or is unfolded by another. But Mr. Herbert Spencer, who may almost be considered the father of the modern theory of Evolution, gives to the word another meaning, which, in a sense, may even seem to be nearly the opposite of this. He defines it to be "a change from incoherent homogeneity to coherent heterogeneity, accompanying the dissipation of motion and the integration of matter" ("First Principles"). The whole theory is based upon three principles, which that celebrated author expounds at great length—namely, that matter is indestructible, motion continuous, and force persistent. The entire problem, therefore, is "the law of the continuous redistribution of matter and motion." This meaning of the word Evolution is not at all that which I first described; but, as Mr. Spencer tells us what he means when he uses the word, we have no right to quarrel with him because his definition includes more, and sometimes that which is somewhat opposed to that in general use. Evolution he uses as antithetical to dissolution. He fully explains what he means by it, and then adds: "All that we can do is carefully to define the interpretation to be given to it." And, that being done, we are in a fair way to understand the thing itself. Two contending processes will be seen everywhere in operation in the physical universe, antagonistic the one to the other—each one for a time triumphing over its opposite. These we call Evolution and Dissolution. Spencer remarks that "Evolution, under its simplest aspect, is the integration of matter and the dissipation of motion; while dissolution is the absorption of motion and the concomitant disintegration of matter." It will easily be seen, therefore, that, following Mr. Herbert Spencer's Evolution, is the concentration or transition of matter from a diffused to a more condensed and perceptible form. This change he traces in the system of the stars, in the geological history of the earth, in the growth and development of plants and animals, in the history of language and the fine arts, and in the condition of civilised States. Thus the matter of which the universe is composed has progressed from a vague, incoherent, and, perhaps, all but homogeneous nebula of tremendous extent, to complete systems of suns, worlds, comets, sea, and land, and countless varieties of living things, each composed of many very different parts and of complex organisations.

Coming to organic bodies, there may be included under this term Evolution many different laws, some of which we may not even know as yet, and a great number of processes acting sometimes in unison, and often in antagonism the one to the other. It is quite possible, moreover, that the whole of the theories at present held as to the cause

and mode of the details in the operation of Evolution may be erroneous, or at all events only partially true ; but that would in no way affect Evolution itself. For example, Natural Selection, as so ably and brilliantly expounded by Mr. Darwin, and which is one of the theories covered by the term Evolution, may hereafter turn out to have been much over-rated in its power to effect changes in organic structure ; and yet Evolution remains as the true theory of the universe notwithstanding. Perhaps each of the theories at present held may contain some truth, and hereafter we may discover a law at present unknown, which shall contain more than any or all of them. This would in no way destroy the theory of Evolution, which is, no doubt, the process by which things have been brought to their present condition. And it will be seen that Evolution is directly opposed to special acts of creation, such as are described in the Bible, whether regard be had to the formation of worlds, the production of plants and animals, or the creation of man. No such special creation as is recorded in the first chapter of the book of Genesis can by any possibility have occurred if Evolution be the true method of the universe, as I will endeavour to show by treating under different heads the various sections of this extensive subject.

The Formation of Worlds.—According to Evolution, there was a time in the remote past the date of which we cannot even imagine, and any attempt to comprehend the periods that have rolled by since would paralyse our highest intellectual powers. When the matter which is now seen shaped into suns and stars of vast magnitude and of incomprehensible number was diffused over the whole of the space in which those bodies are now seen moving, of extreme variety, and, perhaps, of nearly homogeneous character, the human mind is unable to comprehend. This matter, by virtue of the very laws now seen in operation in the physical universe, would, in time, shape itself into the bodies with which the heavens are strewed, shining with a glory that awes while it charms. What is called in these days the nebular cosmogony may be said to have arisen with Sir William Herschell, who discovered with his telescope what seemed to be worlds and systems in course of formation—that is, they were in various states, which appeared to work a gradation and different degrees of condensation. M. Laplace, without any knowledge of Herschell's speculations, arrived at a similar idea upon totally different grounds—namely, the uniformity of the heavenly bodies. He showed that, if matter existed in such a different state as the nebular theory assumed, and if nuclei existed in it, there would become centres of aggregation in which a rotary motion would increase as the agglomeration proceeded. Further, Laplace urged that, at certain intervals, the centrifugal force, acting from the rotating mass, would overcome the

force of agglomeration, and the result would be a series of rings existing apart from the mass to which they originally adhered, each of which would retain the motion which it possessed at the moment of separation. These rings would again break up into spherical bodies, and hence come what are termed primary planets and their satellites. This La Place showed to be at least possible, and the results in the case of our solar system are just what would have been expected from the operations of this law. For example, every one knows that the rapidity of the motions in the planets is in the ratio of their nearness to the sun. Many facts seem to support this theory, such as the existence of the hundred and more small bodies called asteroids observed between Mars and Jupiter, which doubtless indicate a zone agglomeration at several points, and the rings of Saturn giving an example of zones still preserved intact. This theory has been held by some of the most eminent astronomers, and is most ably advocated by the late Professor Nichol in his "Architecture of the Heavens," the most delightful book probably ever written on the subject of Astronomy. Some experiments have also been tried—as, for example, that of Plateau on a rotating globe of oil—which show the operation of the law by which suns, planets, and their moons were formed. This is the evolution of worlds, and it is unnecessary to point out how diametrically this is opposed to the special creation described in Genesis, where the heavens and the earth are called suddenly into being by the fiat of God, and the sun stated to be created four days afterwards. Which theory should in these days of thought commend itself to a rational mind?

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be continued.)

HERBERT SPENCER'S PHILOSOPHY: AN EXPOSITION.**X.****"FIRST PRINCIPLES."****EVOLUTION : ITS LAW.**

EVOLUTION is sometimes simple and sometimes compound. Though it is always an integration of matter and a dissipation of motion, it is often much more. When the whole history of an aggregate comprises nothing more than the approaches of its components towards their common centre and their recessions from their common centre, the process of Evolution is simple. But when these primary redistributions of Matter and Motion are accompanied by secondary redistributions, the process constitutes compound Evolution.

The difference between the two kinds of Evolution may first be stated in the abstract and then illustrated by concrete examples. "An aggregate that is widely diffused, or but little integrated, is an aggregate that contains a large quantity of motion—actual or potential, or both. An aggregate that has become completely integrated or dense is one that contains comparatively little motion : most of the motion its parts once had has been lost during the integration that has rendered it dense. Hence, other things equal, in proportion to the quantity of motion which an aggregate contains will be the quantity of secondary change in the arrangement of its parts that accompanies the primary change in their arrangement. Hence also, other things equal, in proportion to the time during which the internal motion is retained will be the quantity of this secondary redistribution that accompanies the primary redistribution." These general propositions may be enforced by special instances. "When a vessel has been filled to the brim with loose fragments, shaking the vessel causes them to settle down into less space, so that more may be put in. And when among the fragments there are some of much greater specific gravity than the rest, these, in the course of a prolonged shaking, find their way to the bottom.....We have a group of units acted on by an incident force—the attraction of the Earth. So long as these units are not agitated,

this incident force produces no change in their relative positions : agitate them, and immediately their loose arrangement passes into a more compact arrangement. Again, so long as they are not agitated, the incident force cannot separate the heavier units from the lighter ; agitate them, and immediately the heavier units begin to segregate.

More fully illustrative are the instances in which, by artificially adding to or subtracting from that molecular motion which we call its heat, we give aggregate increased or diminished facilities for re-arranging its molecules. The process of tempering steel or annealing glass shows us that internal redistribution is aided by insensible vibrations.....When some molten glass is dropped into water, and when its outside is thus, by sudden solidification, prevented from partaking in that contraction which the subsequent cooling of the inside tends to produce, the units are left in such a state of tension that the mass flies into fragments if a small portion of it be broken off. But if this mass be kept for a day or two at a considerable heat, though a heat not sufficient to alter its form or produce any sensible diminution of hardness, this extreme brittleness disappears : the component particles being thrown into greater agitation, the tensile forces are enabled to re-arrange them into a state of equilibrium." Keeping well in view the general principle here illustrated, let us now mark how, in accordance with it, Evolution becomes either simple or compound—simple under some conditions, composed under others.

"If a little sal-ammoniac, or other volatile solid, be heated, it is disintegrated by the absorbed molecular motion, and rises in gas. When the gas so produced, coming in contact with a cold surface, loses its excess of molecular motion, integration takes place—the substance assumes the form of crystals. This is a case of simple Evolution. The process of concentration of matter and dissipation of motion does not here proceed in a gradual manner—does not pass through stages occupying considerable periods ; but, the molecular motion which reduced it to the gaseous state being dissipated, the matter passes suddenly to a completely solid state. The result is that along with this primary redistribution there go on no appreciable secondary redistributions." Take now a case of compound Evolution. "A gaseous mass losing its heat, and undergoing a consequent decrease of bulk, is not subject only to this change which brings its parts nearer to their common centre, but also to many simultaneous changes. The great quantity of molecular motion contained in it giving, as we have seen that it must, great molecular mobility, renders every part sensitive to every incident force ; and, as a result, its parts have various motions besides that implied by their progressing integration. Indeed, these secondary motions, which we know as currents, are so important and conspicuous as quite to subor-

dinate the primary motion." Here we observe how Evolution ceases to be simple and becomes compound.

Never forgetting that Evolution is always fundamentally an integration of Matter and a dissipation of Motion, whether accompanied or unaccompanied incidently by other transformations of Matter and Motion, we pass now to a consideration of Evolution under its four different aspects. To each aspect we shall devote a separate section.

Under its first aspect, *Evolution is a passage from a less coherent state to a more coherent state.* This law applies equally to Astronomy, to Geology, to Biology, to Psychology, and to Sociology.

Take an astronomical instance—the Solar System. "The belief, for which there are so many reasons, that this has had a nebular genesis, is the belief that it has arisen by the integration of matter and concomitant loss of motion. Evolution, under its primary aspect, is illustrated most simply and clearly by this passage of the Solar System from a widely-diffused incoherent state to a consolidated coherent state.

While, according to the nebular hypothesis, there has been going on this gradual concentration of the Solar System as an aggregate, there has been a simultaneous concentration of each partially-independent member. The substance of every planet in passing through its stages of nebulous ring, gaseous spheroid, liquid spheroid, and spheroid externally solidified, has in essentials paralleled the changes gone through by the general mass; and every satellite has done the like.

Moreover, at the same time that the matter of the whole, as well as the matter of each partially-independent part, has been thus integrating, there has been the further integration implied by increasing combination among the parts. The satellites of each planet are linked with their primary into a balanced cluster; while the planets and their satellites form with the Sun a compound group of which the members are more strongly bound up with one another than were the far-spread portions of the nebulous medium out of which they arose."

In geologic evolution we see equally well this change from a less coherent to a more coherent form. Take the history of the Earth, as read in the structure of its crust.

"Leaving behind the period when the more volatile elements now existing as solids were kept by the high temperature in a gaseous form, we begin with the fact that, until the Earth's surface had cooled down below red heat, the vast mass of water at present covering three-fifths of it must have existed as vapour. This enormous volume of disintegrated liquid became integrated as fast as the dissipation of the Earth's contained motion allowed; leaving at length a comparatively small portion unintegrated, which would be far smaller but for the unceasing absorption of molecular

motion from the Sun. In the formation of the Earth's crust we have a similar change similarly caused. The passage from a thin solid film, everywhere fissured and moveable on the subjacent molten matter, to a crust so thick and strong as to be but now and then very slightly dislocated by disturbing forces, illustrates the process. And while, in the superficial solidification, we see under one form how concentration accompanies loss of contained motion, we see it under another form in that diminution of the Earth's bulk implied by superficial corrugation. Local or secondary integrations have advanced along with this general integration. A molten spheroid merely skinned over with solid matter could have presented nothing more than small patches of land and water. Differences of elevation great enough to form islands of considerable size imply a crust of some rigidity; and only as the crust grew thick could the land be united into continents divided by oceans. So, too, with the more striking elevations. The collapse of a thin crust round its cooling and contracting contents would throw it into low ridges: it must have acquired a relatively great depth and strength before extensive mountain systems of vast elevation became possible."

The truth that Evolution is always a passage from the less coherent to the more coherent is beautifully exemplified in biologic evolution. Remembering "that every plant grows by concentrating in itself elements that were before diffused as gases, and that every animal grows by re-concentrating these elements previously dispersed in surrounding plants and animals, it will be here proper to complete the conception by pointing out that the early history of a plant or animal, still more clearly than its later history, shows us this fundamental process. For the microscopic germ of each organism undergoes for a long time no other change than that implied by absorption of nutriment. Cells imbedded in the stroma of an ovary become ova by little else than continued growth at the expense of adjacent materials. And when, after fertilisation, a more active evolution commences, its most conspicuous trait is the drawing-in, to a germinal centre, of the substance which the ovum contains, In the mammalian embryo the heart, at first a long pulsating blood-vessel, by-and-by twists upon itself and integrates. The bile-cells constituting the rudimentary liver do not simply become different from the wall of the intestine in which they at first lie; but, as they accumulate, they simultaneously diverge from it and consolidate into an organ. The anterior segments of the cerebro-spinal axis, which are at first continuous with the rest, and distinguished only by their larger size, undergo a gradual union; and at the same time the resulting head folds into a mass clearly marked off from the rest of the vertebral column. The like process, variously exemplified in other

organs, is meanwhile exhibited by the body as a whole ; which becomes integrated somewhat in the same way that an outspread handkerchief and its contents become integrated when its edges are drawn in and fastened to make a bundle.

Analogous changes go on long after birth, and continue even up to old age. In man that solidification of the bony framework which, during childhood, is seen in the coalescence of portions of the same bone ossified from different centres, is afterwards seen in the coalescence of bones that were originally distinct. The appendages of the vertebræ unite with the vertebral centres to which they belong—a change not completed until towards thirty. At the same time, the epiphyses, formed separately from the main bodies of their respective bones, have their cartilaginous connections turned into osseous ones—are fused to the masses beneath them. The component vertebræ of the sacrum, which remain separate till about the sixteenth year, then begin to unite ; and in ten or a dozen years more their union is complete. Still later occurs the coalescence of the coccygeal vertebræ ; and there are some other bony unions which remain unfinished unless advanced age is reached."

The kind of change thus exhibited under the heads of Astronomy, of Geology, and of Biology, is no less traceable throughout all other phenomena, including those of Thought and of Society.

Under its first aspect, then, *Evolution is a change from a less coherent form to a more coherent form, consequent upon the dissipation of motion and the integration of matter.* This holds true alike of the Universe as a whole and of every single object composing it—holds true of the earliest changes which took place in the crust of the globe and of the latest changes now taking place in Society and in the products of social life.

Under its second aspect *Evolution is a change from a homogeneous state to a heterogeneous state.* Together with a change from the incoherent to the coherent, there takes place a change from the uniform to the multiform. "While there is a progressing concentration of the aggregate, either by a closer approach of the matter within its limits, or by the drawing in of further matter, or by both ; and while the more or less distinct parts into which the aggregate divides and sub-divides are generally concentrating ; these parts are also becoming unlike—unlike in size, or in form, or in texture, or in composition, or in several or all of these. The same process is exhibited by the whole and by its members. The entire mass is integrating, and simultaneously differentiating from other masses ; and each member of it is also integrating, and simultaneously differentiating from other members."

This passage of the all-alike into the not-all-alike is clearly displayed

in the progress of Man.

"It is alike true that, during the period in which the Earth has been peopled, the human organism has grown more heterogeneous among the civilised divisions of the species; and that the species, as a whole, has been made more heterogeneous by the multiplication of races and the differentiation of these races from each other.

In proof of the first of these positions, we may cite the fact that, in the relative development of the limbs, the civilised man departs more widely from the general type of the placental mammalia than do the lower human races. Though often possessing well-developed body and arms, the Papuan has extremely small legs..... But in the European the greater length and massiveness of the legs has become very marked—the fore and hind limbs are relatively more heterogeneous. Again, the greater ratio which the cranial bones bear to the facial bones illustrates the same truth. Among the vertebrata in general, evolution is marked by an increasing heterogeneity in the vertebral column, and more especially in the segments constituting the skull: the higher forms being distinguished by the relatively larger size of the bones which cover the brain, and the relatively smaller size of those which form the jaws, etc. Now, this characteristic, which is stronger in man than in any other creature, is stronger in the European than in the savage. Moreover, judging from the greater extent and variety of faculty he exhibits, we may infer that the civilised man has also a more complex or heterogeneous nervous system than the uncivilised man; and indeed the fact is in part visible in the increased ratio which his cerebrum bears to the subjacent ganglia. If further elucidation be needed, we may find it in every nursery. The infant European has sundry marked points of resemblance to the lower human races; as in the flatness of the alæ of the nose, the depression of its bridge, the divergent and forward opening of the nostrils, the form of the lips, the absence of a frontal sinus, the width between the eyes, the smallness of the legs. Now, as the developmental process by which these traits are turned into those of the adult European is a continuation of that change from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous displayed by the previous evolution of the embryo,.....it follows that the parallel developmental process by which the like traits of the barbarous races have been turned into those of the civilised races has also been a continuation of the change from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous.

The truth of the second position—that mankind, as a whole, have become more heterogeneous—is so obvious as scarcely to need illustration. Every work on Ethnology, by its divisions and subdivisions to races, bears testimony to it. Even were we to admit the hypothesis that mankind originated from several separate stocks, it would still remain true, that, as from each of these stocks there have

sprung many now widely-different tribes, which are proved by philological evidence to have had a common origin, the race as a whole is far less homogeneous than it once was. Add to which that we have, in the Anglo-Americans, an example of a new variety arising within these few generations; and that, if we may trust the descriptions of observers, we are likely soon to have another such example in Australia."

Super-organic evolution exemplifies this trait with the same clearness. The products of the brain, not less than the products of the physique, show a gradual progression from an all-alike state to a not-all-alike state. "Strange as it may seem, we find it no less true, that all forms of written language, of painting, and of sculpture, have a common root in the politico-religious decorations of ancient temples and palaces. Little resemblance as they now have, the bust that stands on the console, the landscape that hangs against the wall, and the copy of the *Times* lying upon the table, are remotely akin; not only in nature, but by extraction. The brazen face of the knocker which the postman has just lifted is related not only to the woodcuts of the *Illustrated London News* which he is delivering, but to the characters of the *billet-doux* which accompanies it. Between the painted window, the prayer-book on which its light falls, and the adjacent monument, there is consanguinity. The effigies on our coins, the signs over our shops, the figures that fill every ledger, the coat-of-arms outside the carriage-panel, and the placards inside the omnibus, are, in common with dolls, blue-books, and paper-hangings, lineally descended from the rude sculpture-paintings in which the Egyptians represented the triumphs and worship of their god-kings." Perhaps no better example can be given of the change from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous.

Uniting the first aspect with the second, we now observe that *Evolution is a change from an incoherent homogeneity to a coherent heterogeneity, accompanying the dissipation of motion and the integration of matter.*

Under its third aspect, *Evolution is a change from the indefinite to the definite.*

The Arts supply us with innumerable instances showing this development from the indefinite to the definite. Take first the Industrial Arts. "Flint implements of the kind recently found in certain of the later geologic deposits show the extreme want of precision in men's first handiworks. Though a great advance on these is seen in the tools and weapons of existing savage tribes, yet an inexactness in forms and fittings distinguishes such tools and weapons from those of civilised races. In a smaller degree, the productions of less-advanced nations

are characterised by like defects. A Chinese junk, with all its contained furniture and appliances, nowhere presents a line that is quite straight, a uniform curve, or a true surface. Nor do the utensils and machines of our ancestors fail to exhibit a similar inferiority to our own. An antique chair, an old fireplace, a lock of the last century, or almost any article of household use that has been preserved for a few generations, proves by contrast how greatly the industrial products of our own time excel those of the past in their accuracy. Since planing machines have been invented, it has become possible to produce absolutely straight lines, and surfaces so truly level as to be air-tight when applied to each other; while in the dividing-engine of Troughton, in the micrometer of Whitworth, and in the microscopes that show fifty thousand divisions to the inch, we have an exactness as far exceeding that reached in the works of our great-grandfathers as theirs exceeded that of the aboriginal celt-makers."

If we turn to the Fine Arts, we find that they manifest a parallel progress to that of the Industrial Arts. Take fiction and the drama. "In the marvellous tales current among Eastern nations, in the romantic legends of feudal Europe, as well as in the mystery-plays and those immediately succeeding them, we see great want of correspondence to the realities of life; alike in the predominance of supernatural events, in the extremely improbable coincidences, and in the vaguely-indicated personages. Along with social advance there has been a progressive diminution of unnaturalness—an approach to truth of representation. And now, novels and plays are applauded in proportion to the fidelity with which they exhibit individual characters; improbabilities, like the improbabilities that preceded them, are disallowed; and there is even an incipient abandonment of those elaborate plots which life rarely if ever furnishes."

In each of these cases we have presented very vividly the truth that Evolution is always progress from the indefinite to the definite.

Modifying our definition so as to include this third trait of development, and joining it with the two traits previously described, we now find that *Evolution is a change from an indefinite incoherent homogeneity to a definite coherent heterogeneity, accompanying the dissipation of motion and the integration of matter.*

Finally, we have to consider Evolution under its fourth aspect. Hitherto we have emphasized the fact that *Matter* changes from indefiniteness to definiteness, from incoherence to coherence, and from all-alikeness to not-all-alikeness. We have now to emphasize the kindred fact that *Motion* undergoes a parallel series of changes.

"The progress of a child in speech very completely exhibits the transformation. Infantine noises are comparatively homogeneous; alike

as being severally long-drawn and nearly uniform from end to end, and as being constantly repeated with but little variation of quality between narrow limits. They are quite un-coördinated—there is no integration of them into compound sounds. They are inarticulate, or without those definite beginnings and endings characterising the sounds we call words. Progress shows itself first in the multiplication of the inarticulate sounds : the extreme vowels are added to the medium vowels, and the compound to the simple. Presently the movements which form the simpler consonants are achieved, and some of the sounds become sharply cut ; but this definiteness is partial, for, only initial consonants being used, the sounds end vaguely. While an approach to distinctness thus results, there also results, by combination of different consonants with the same vowels, an increase of heterogeneity ; and along with the complete distinctness which terminal consonants give, arises a further great addition to the number of unlike sounds produced. The more difficult consonants and the compound consonants, imperfectly articulated at first, are by-and-by articulated with precision ; and there comes yet another multitude of different and definite words—words that imply many kinds of vocal movements, severally performed with exactness, as well as perfectly integrated into complex groups. The subsequent advance to dissyllables and polysyllables, and to involved combinations of words, shows the still higher degree of integration and heterogeneity eventually reached by these organic motions.

The acts of consciousness correlated with these nervo-muscular acts, of course go through parallel phases ; and the advance from childhood to maturity yields daily proof that the changes on which their physical side are nervous processes, and on their mental side are processes of thought, become more various, more defined, and more coherent. At first the intellectual functions are very much alike in kind—recognitions and classifications of simple impressions alone go on ; but in course of time these functions become multiform. Reasoning grows distinguishable, and eventually we have conscious induction and deduction ; deliberate recollection and deliberate imagination are added to simple unguided association of ideas ; more special modes of mental action, as those which result in mathematics, music, poetry, arise ; and within each of these divisions the mental processes are ever being further differentiated. In definiteness it is the same. The infant makes its observations so inaccurately that it fails to distinguish individuals. The child errs continually in its spelling, its grammar, its arithmetic. The youth forms incorrect judgments on the affairs of life. Only with maturity comes that precise co-ordination in the nervous processes that is implied by a good adjustment of thoughts to things. Lastly, with the integration by which simple mental acts are combined into complex mental acts, it is so likewise. In the nursery you

cannot obtain continuous attention—there is inability to form a coherent series of impressions; and there is a parallel inability to unite many co-existent impressions, even of the same order: witness the way in which a child's remarks on a picture show that it attends only to the individual objects represented, and never to the picture as a whole. But with advancing years it becomes possible to understand an involved sentence, to follow long trains of reasoning, to hold in one mental grasp numerous concurrent circumstances. The like progressive integration takes place among the mental changes we distinguish as feelings; which in a child act singly, producing impulsiveness, but in an adult act more in concert, producing a comparatively balanced conduct.

“After these illustrations supplied by individual evolution, we may deal briefly with those supplied by general evolution, which are analogous to them. A creature of very low intelligence, when aware of some large object in motion near it, makes a spasmodic movement, causing, it may be, a leap or a dart. The perceptions implied are relatively simple, homogeneous, and indefinite: the moving objects are not distinguished in their kinds as injurious or otherwise, as advancing or receding. The actions of escape are similarly all of one kind, have no adjustments of direction, and may bring the creature nearer the source of peril instead of further off. A stage higher, when the dart or the leap is away from danger, we see the nervous changes so far specialised that there results distinction of direction, indicating a greater variety among them, a greater co-ordination or integration of them in each process, and a greater definiteness. In still higher animals that discriminate between enemies and not-enemies, as a bird that flies from a man but not from a cow, the acts of perception have severally become united into more complex wholes, since cognition of certain differential attributes is implied; they have become more multiform, since each additional component impression adds to the number of possible compounds; and they have, by consequence, become more specific in their correspondences with objects—more definite. And then in animals, so intelligent that they identify by sight not species only, but individuals of a species, the mental changes are yet further distinguished in the same three ways. In the course of human evolution the law is equally manifested. The thoughts of the savage are nothing like so heterogeneous in their kinds as those of the civilised man, whose complex environment presents a multiplicity of new phenomena. His mental acts, too, are much less involved, he has no words for abstract ideas, and is found to be incapable of integrating the elements of such ideas. And in all but simple matters there is none of that precision in his thinking which, among civilised men, leads to the exact conclusions of Science. Nor do the emotions fail to exhibit a parallel contrast.

"Take actions devoted to defence or aggression. At first the military function, undifferentiated from the rest (all men in primitive societies being warriors) is relatively homogeneous, is ill-combined, and is indefinite: the savages making a joint attack severally fight independently, in similar ways, and without order. But as societies evolve and the military function becomes separate, we see that while its scale increases, it progresses in multiiformity, in definiteness, and in combination. The movements of the thousands of soldiers that replace the tens of warriors, are divided and re-divided in their kinds—here are bodies that manœuvre and fire artillery; and there are battalions that fight on foot; and elsewhere are troops that charge on horseback. Within each of these differentiated functions there come others: there are distinct duties discharged by privates, sergeants, captains, colonels, generals, as also by those who constitute the commissariat and those who attend to the wounded. The actions that have thus become comparatively heterogeneous in general and in detail have simultaneously increased in precision. Accuracy of evolutions is given by perpetual drill; so that in battle men and the regiments formed of them are made to take definite positions and perform definite acts at definite times. Once more, there has gone on that integration by which the multiiform actions of an army are directed to a single end. By a co-ordinating apparatus having the commander-in-chief for its centre, the charges, and halts, and retreats, are duly concerted; and a hundred thousand individual actions are united under one will."

We know, then, that all Motion, as well as all Matter, evolves from indefiniteness to definiteness, from incoherence to coherence, and from homogeneity to heterogeneity. This law is universal, holding of all classes of movements—exhibited alike in the evolution of an army and in that of a nation, in the evolution of a plant and in that of a comet, in the evolution of a limb and in that of a thought.

A completed conception of Evolution must, therefore, take in this fourth trait. Amending our definition, and transposing the clauses, we get, as a finished formula—*Evolution is an integration of matter and a concomitant dissipation of motion; during which the matter passes from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity; and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation.*

That this final formula contains all the elements of a perfect definition need scarcely be added. It contains these elements and nothing more. Take away a single term, and you exclude some trait that is characteristic of Evolution; add a single term, and you include some trait that is not characteristic of Evolution. Evolution is the proposition, the whole proposition, and nothing but the proposition.

IGNOTUS.

THE TRUTHSEEKER.

PART I.

HE was a fair-faced boy, with earnest eyes
 Like cottage windows open to the morn,
 Soliciting the sunlight. By his side—
 The snow-fall of his beard whitening his robe—
 Walked one grown old in wisdom as in years ;
 A kindly-visaged man, whose broad set brow
 Was furrowed with philosophy : and as,
 All gnarled and knotted with the centuries,
 A tree bears on its boughs a tender green,
 Shielding the young plant growing at its feet,
 So o'er his young companion, eager eyed,
 The foliage of his large experience spread
 With loving condescension. Oft these two,
 Seeking no other fellowship, walked forth
 To meet the sun at daybreak, or, at noon,
 To lie within the shade of fragrant woods
 With books and conversation ; while the sage,
 Training his speech to meet the level wants
 Of that young intellect, turned daily o'er
 The leaves of Nature's volume, pointing out
 The growth, the beauty, and decay of things,
 The instinct life of insect and of brute,
 The order of the universe, and, last,
 The mighty march of manhood, tracing back
 The history of nations as they rose and fell,
 The standard lamps they lighted for all time,
 And the blood-flow and horrors which still stain
 The pages of humanity, To all,
 In wondering love and confidence, the boy
 Lent an attentive ear, breaking the speech
 Of his great teacher with much questioning,
 And sometimes wise suggestion. So he grew,
 As grows a sapling, bending to the breeze
 Of varying opinion, or with dew
 Of tears weeping for wrong, or glorying
 In the good of fructifying sunshine.
 One only theme, though frequent in his thought,
 The sage ne'er touched upon ; but, as a stream

Full flowing through a woodland, suddenly
 Changing its course when most it gives delight,
 Is lost to sight, leaving the landscape bare,
 So, when the God of Nature seemed to be
 The natural sequence to his ripe discourse,
 Of God he spoke not. Oft the youth had asked
 The why and wherefore of the wondrous world ;
 The meaning of creation and its end ;
 Whence all the sin and suffering, good and gain ;
 And who made Him, who all things must have made ?
 To whom his mentor answered : " Patience, child ;
 Thou art too young for problems." So the boy,
 With troubled mind and visage, held his peace.
 And thus the years passed on, and with them grew
 Youth into manhood ; and old age grew weak,
 And, sickening, gathered up his robes to die.
 Then, with the younger's in the elder's hand—
 The one all tears, the other calm with hope—
 The dying patriarch breathed his farewell words.
 " Dear son—for such thou art to me, although
 No blood unites us—it is time to speak
 Of what has not been spoken : cease to weep
 For that which weeping heals not ; but with joy
 Look forth upon the future, now thine own,
 With no dear, fond old man to show the way.
 But thou wilt have my staff to bear thee up
 Along the unknown highway ; that old staff
 That I have taught thee how to lean upon—
 I mean the staff of virtue. That alone
 Thy inexperienced steps shall guide, defend,
 And in the conflict of strange counsellors
 Be thy sure stay. But I have other things
 Whereof to speak, and weaker grows my voice:
 List to what yet I have not told thee of."
 Then, with a pause : "'Tis now some twenty years
 Since, at my outer door, one summer's night,
 A sudden knocking woke me from my sleep.
 Presuming a belated traveller stood
 In need of rest or counsel, I arose,
 And, hastening, oped the door ; but no one saw :
 I heard alone a quick, retreating step
 Breaking the silence, and then all was still.
 Wondering, I turned to close the door again,
 When, at my feet, I heard a tender cry,
 And, looking, saw a child, scarce three years old,
 Gazing upon me, with great eyes of blue.
 Annoyed, I hastened to the outer gate,
 And searched the road's long length, and called aloud ;
 But no voice answered, and the night was still.

So, leading in the child, I lit the lamps
 And questioned it, receiving only smiles
 Of childish confidence, which won my heart
 And turned my hesitation into trust.
 Then, heating food, I fed it on my knee
 Until it slept, and laid it in my bed ;
 And, as I did so, felt within its dress—
 A dress of fine material, shapely cut—
 A something crumple, and drew forth a note
 On vellum paper, bearing my address.
 That note was from thy mother. When all's o'er,
 And thou hast laid me quietly at rest,
 It will be found with other papers, locked,
 Securing the possessions left to thee.
 Therein thou'lt find the simple mystery solved
 Of my persistent silence, on a theme
 Thy mother interdicted, till the day
 When thy maturer years should seek the way
 For thine own guidance, to the truth in things.
 But whether I was right, or whether wrong,
 In holding from thee individual views
 By education taught me, thou wilt own
 That I have faithful been to the dear trust
 Of one who, wracked with misery, sought me out
 To lay her life's love-blossom at my feet."
 Then, for some hours, there was no further speech,
 And the light flickered in the old man's eyes ;
 And as the dawn came on the light went out—
 The younger's in the elder's hand enclasped.

Not till the churchyard mound was thick with flowers—
 To solace, not the dead, but him who mourned—
 Did he with reverend hands unfold the page,
 And read his mother's letter. Thus it ran :
 " In pity, if not love, O generous Sir,
 I do beseech thee take this gracious boy
 And rear him, for his wretched mother's sake,
 To cheer thy lonely home. From far I come
 To leave him at thy hospitable door,
 Knowing thee wise and good, from much report ;
 And far from this I go, wearied with life,
 To lay me down to die in place unknown.
 The child was born in wedlock, and no fault
 Stains the pure record of his parent's love.
 Our home was happy till his father died,
 When followed losses, sickness, and distress,
 Until my woman's weakness sought relief
 In what men call religion. Oft I prayed :
 But all my supplications, wet with tears,

Remained unanswered, and my heart grew cold.
Then came the preachers to me, each in turn,
Of various persuasions ; each one right
In his own doctrine, and all others wrong ;
With tenets, dogmas, articles of faith,
And subtle sophistries ; who bade me take
As "revelation" supernatural things,
Insoluble by rules of common sense,
And full of contradictions ; till my mind,
Worn by the conflict of opposing thoughts,
Unhinged itself from reason and was wrecked.
Therefore, if thou dost grant a mother's prayer,
And take this child unto thy loving heart,
Grant, I beseech thee, one petition more.
Teach the boy what thou wilt, but teach him not
Theology, or creeds, or Bible lore ;
And keep him from professors of the faiths—
Good men and true according to their lights,
Who make their own opinions law Divine.
So rear him, hating wrong and loving right,
Until he reaches manhood, with a mind
Like a fair page, on which to make record
Of what his reason dictates and approves.
I have been vexed with falsifying faiths :
With anguish and disease, and shattered nerves ;
But now I write with calmness and content,
Knowing how soon disease will do its work
And give me peace, leaving my darling boy
Safe in thy wise and charitable care.
A mother's dying blessing crown ye both :
My eyes are dim with weeping—so, Farewell."

EDGAR RICHTON.

(To be continued next month.)

RELIGION AND WAR.

THIRD PAPER.

IN concluding my remarks on the connection between the Jewish religion and war, it seems only just that I should call attention to the fact that, if the Hebrew Scriptures relate the most horrible religious wars, they contain also the most beautiful prophecies of an ultimate perpetual religious peace. The poets of other nations placed the Saturnian Age, the Golden Age of peace and plenty, in the past. Among the Hebrews the priestly historians have also their legendary Eden or primæval Paradise; but their prophets, while appealing to the past, were chiefly concerned with their own age and with the future. Some of their hopeful and helpful words, some of their bright dreams and radiant visions, still awaiting fulfilment, not yet translated into fact, may well inspire us to-day in our work for humanity.

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them." It might be absurd to take this literally; for, as some cynic has remarked, "the leopard" will only "lie down with the kid" inside him, when he has made a meal of the kid. But we may take it to mean that many of the rude forces of nature, including the brute energies of beasts and men, shall either vanish from this mundane scene, or be tamed and restrained and made subservient to the uses of man, and of that pure and gentle type of humanity typified by "a little child." "And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den." The next verse shows that this peace is expected to take place in connection with the prophet's Theistic religion. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Again: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace." "I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders." If it be said that these are only patriotic wishes

or the one "chosen people," and are, therefore, in their limited purview, told also of "strong nations afar off" that "they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks." "Nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." But if this religious peace was expected to be established under one uniform religion, there is some reason to think that it was no longer believed that it would be effected by the sword and by the violent suppression of all other religions. One prophet distinguishes himself by a remarkable utterance, actually introducing the doctrine of Religious Non-Intervention. "For all people will walk every one in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever." This, in the main, has been the spirit of Judaism ever since the destruction of Jerusalem and the final dispersion of the Jewish race.

The Jews, having lost all semblance of independent political power, can no longer persecute those of different race and faith; and, with the loss of this power, they seem also to have lost all desire to propagate their religion. They no longer "compass sea and land to make one proselyte," and converts are only received with reluctance, and after a long period of probation. Persecution is reserved for apostate brethren; Gentiles are regarded with coldness and contempt. Much of this is owing to the violence and ostracism to which they have been subjected, and there are not wanting signs that, under better treatment, some of it is giving way. The exclusiveness of Judaism is not the loftiest ideal. It is not true to the best teaching of their own prophets; but it is infinitely better than their ancient intolerance and religious propaganda by the sword.

I have said so much about Judaism and war that it will not be possible to illustrate my subject from Mohammedanism or Christianity, or any other religion, with the same degree of fulness; but neither will it be necessary. The principles, the causes, of religious wars are probably substantially the same in all cases. "*Ex uno, disce omnes.*" Of Mohammedanism and of Christianity it may confidently be affirmed that whatever in them is warlike and cruel, intolerant and bigoted, is either derived directly from Judaism, or is in conformity with the worst portion of its teaching.

Let us, however, take a brief glance at the connection between the Mohammedan religion and war. Here we find a religion, that was also a polity, established, and with great success, by one man, and during the lifetime of the founder. Consequently, in that same brief space it passed from the pacific and persuasive to the persecuting and aggressive stage. A struggling religion is usually tolerant; a successful one is almost always intolerant, if it be united with power. Mohammed, a man of contemplative disposition, great ability, and moral earnestness,

began his mission as a reformer, denouncing the gross idolatry which prevailed at Mecca. His mother, it is said, was a Jewess, converted to Christianity by a Syrian monk, from whom Mohammed himself received instruction in what was, unfortunately, one of the grosser forms of the Christian religion—a religion, be it remembered, which was a development of that Judaism we have been considering. The ideas thus received lay dormant for a time, to be revived later with terrible consequences.

There is no reason to suppose that the so-called prophet, however fanatical and self-deluded, was at first other than sincere. His life and teaching, so long as he remained at Mecca, were as mild and inoffensive as the character and doctrine of Buddha, or Jeremiah, or Jesus. But after the Hegira, or flight from Mecca to Medina, we see a momentous change; and it is only natural that this event should be reckoned as the commencement of the Mohammedan era, the beginning of years for all Moslems. For Mohammed was received at Medina with an enthusiastic welcome: the greater part of the inhabitants made profession of Islam, and changed the very name of their city from Yatrib to Medinet-al-Nabi, "the city of the prophet." Now begin the personal corruption of the founder and the moral decadence of his religion. Mohammed is no longer the pure preacher of a pure Monotheism. The buried seeds of Judaism and corrupt Christianity have begun to germinate, and will soon spring up, ripen, and bear deadly fruit. Pious legends are invented, as silly as any of the stories in the Talmud or the Apocryphal Gospels; but these do not particularly concern our subject. What we have to notice is that a spirit of cruelty now manifests itself resembling that of early Judaism and that of post-Constantine Christianity. Mohammed and his fellow-exiles formed themselves into a band of freebooters. Success crowned their efforts from the first; recruits crowded from all quarters to join the prophet's banners. He promised his soldiers that, if victorious, they should be rewarded with booty and beauty; while, if they fell in battle, their souls should instantly enter Paradise, there to enjoy similar rewards to all eternity. As their leader certainly kept his promises with reference to this world, they reasoned from the known to the unknown, and took his word for the other. This, indeed, was a bigger bait than either Judaism or Christianity could offer. Early Judaism knew nothing of a future life; its Promised Land was on earth. Early Christianity promised a heaven of decorous, psalm-singing bliss, at the cost of purity, self-denial, and suffering on earth. But this new religion was one that made the best of both worlds with a vengeance. "There could scarcely be a creed devised more likely to attract proselytes." The successors of the Prophet, especially the first four Saracen caliphs, "were in no wise inferior to

their great master in the energy with which they supported the standard of Islam. He had bequeathed to them the tribes of Arabia, consolidated into a community of fanatics, and distinguished by their implicit faith, their intrepid enthusiasm, their exclusive bigotry, and their sanguinary and desolating zeal.....Idolators, conversion, or death! Christians and Jewish dogs—the Koran, the tribute—or the sword!" Such were their terms for the "Infidels." "Believers, victory, and spoil, and the joys of Paradise!" Such were their bribes for the faithful. Within a century they had extended their sway in Asia from the Mediterranean to the frontiers of China, while towards the west Northern Africa was theirs from the Nile to the Atlantic; Spain lay prostrate, several provinces of France were subdued, and a project to march overland from the Pyrenees to the Bosphorus was only cut short by the death of the Moslem leader. Still more wonderful were their naval triumphs. Within one generation from the Prophet their flag floated triumphant in the Mediterranean; Crete and the southern islands of the Archipelago, as well as Sicily, Corsica, Sardinia, and Southern Italy, were theirs. By the eighth century A.D. it had become very doubtful whether Islamism would not replace Christianity as the dominant religion of Europe; and this was only prevented by the victories of Charles, Martel in the south of France. In Persia the Moslems destroyed the purer religion of Zoroastrianism; in India they demolished the temples and idols of the north-west and erected mosques in the principal towns. In the fifteenth century they overturned the Christian empire of Eastern Europe; and in the city of Constantine, on the shores of the Bosphorus, the Ottoman Sultan and Moslem Caliph was enthroned, and the Christian temple of St. Sophia became a Mohammedan mosque.

J. ASHFORD JENKINSON.

(To be continued.)

PANONTISTIC FRAGMENTS.

EPISODICAL MEN.

SOME men have indomitable persistency, exuberant sympathy, a plente of resources ; yet they never escape from an episodal existence. One of their actions has no necessary connection with the preceding or succeeding actions. Every one of their days is the commencement of a new life. They may do the work of ten men, may have the sufferings of a hundred men ; but their labours are as fruitless as their sorrows, for their own success and for the redemption of the world. From continual failure they grow accustomed to despair ; and never from hope, but always simply from irresistible impulse, they enter on fresh enterprises. Perchance, of the four elements which the older philosophy accepted, the episodal men have too much of the air and the fire, and not enough of the earth and the water. What might they not have been if they had possessed a little more of the two vulgar elements, the water and the earth !

THE RAVEN AND THE DOVE.

In the fable of the ark, which is not without poetical interest, but which is absurd enough when regarded as a history, the raven is sent forth before the dove. This symbolises the war which must ever precede peace in the regeneration of Humanity. Peace, simply as peace, is a curse to the world. The rest which is born of conflict sanctifies alone. A nation is doomed which says that it is willing to sacrifice everything for the sake of peace. Man's chief virtue, from which all other virtues flow, is courage. This is why every nation should have a military training and be evermore ready to take a martial attitude. A nation which gives itself up to Quakers and quacks cannot be too soon swept from the scene.

SCIENTIFIC THEOLOGY.

More than two hundred years ago, in one of his most important works, Spinoza showed the only fruitful way in which the Bible can be studied. Herder and other gifted Germans have nobly applied Spinoza's principles of Biblical interpretation, or, rather, his one grand principle, which is to let the Bible be its own interpreter. But, in England, honest Biblical criticism and interpretation make no progress, and, in regard

to the Bible, all the bigotries and stupidities are as rife and rampant as in the time of the Puritans. English orthodox Christians go to the Bible simply and solely to find confirmation of their creeds, crotchets, and cant. What Hebraism essentially was, whence it sprang, how it grew, why it took certain distinctive developments, uttered itself in certain peculiar fashions, they take no trouble to inquire. Much has been said about Bibliolatry ; it is not, however, the Bible which is adored, but a score of whims which the Bible is supposed to countenance or reveal. No one knows and feels the Bible less than the fanatical Evangelical who is howling for ever his vulgar slang as its champion, for ever denouncing as Infidels the devout inquirers who, in harmony with Spinoza's teachings, strive to enter into the Bible's deepest soul.

THE LAUREL CROWN.

Was it well for Rome when the triumphal crown was changed from laurel to gold? The symbol had now a value apart from the patriotic intention, and to that extent was less a symbol. A cross of gold, enriched with precious stones, does not symbolise Christ and Christianity so well as a common cross of wood. As in ancient times and in the Middle Ages, symbolism, in harmony with individuality, must ere long be one of the grand fructifying and elevating forces, and we cannot study it under too many aspects.

THE INSANITIES OF FASHION.

The negresses in Brazil spend three hours a day in desperate attempts to make their curly hair smooth ; many English women spend three hours a day in desperate attempts to make their smooth hair curly. In the follies and monstrosities of fashion, savages and barbarians are always transcended by mortals who boast of their civilisation.

HEBREW MARRIAGES.

Among the ancient Israelites there do not seem to have been any marriage ceremonies. A narrative of singular beauty ends with the simple statement that Isaac brought Rebekah into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife ; and he loved her, and he was comforted after his mother's death. What the distinction was between wives and concubines it is not easy to ascertain ; for the children Jacob had by his wives and those he had by his concubines had exactly the same privileges. Even down to the time of Christ marriage among the descendants of Abraham appears to have been marked by extreme simplicity. The feast was the chief thing ; but priestly sanction, legal recognition, religious rite, seem all to have been lacking.

WILLIAM MACCALL.

THE POPULAR RELIGIOUS FAITH.

THE DOCTRINE OF DESIGN—(*Continued*).

LAST month "Julian" took it in hand to show how "Over-ruling Providence" had connected Joseph's coat of many colours with the present AGNOSTIC monthly. It is a far cry, but time and space are trifles light as air when Providence over-rules.

To show the dire absurdity of the dogma, we will return to the subject, and give a far graver statement—viz., that the whole world was created, and all that therein is—the sun, the moon, and the host of heaven—with special reference to these papers on "The Popular Religious Faith" in THE AGNOSTIC.

We will take it for granted that "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth"—the sun to rule the day, and the moon to rule the night, and that he made the stars also. Having called all other existences into being, his last great work was a replica of himself, Adam and Eve were made in the image of God, and placed in a garden called Eden, somewhere in Mesopotamia, where flows the river Euphrates. In this garden, in the very midst thereof, was the Tree of Knowledge, and the divine images were told they might do what they liked, and eat what they liked, with one exception—they were not to touch the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. In passing, it may be remarked that the Church has ever followed the example of the Creator, by placing an embargo on the Tree of Knowledge. All knowledge, except dogmatic theology, is tabooed. St. Jerome was scourged within an inch of his life by a posse of angels for reading Cicero, and was lame from that beating to the hour of his death. Savonarola induced the men and women of Florence to bring their paintings, their books of poetry and romance, their annals of secular history, their curious works of art, and almost everything else, except their beads and crucifixes, and to burn them in one huge bonfire in the piazza. Astronomy was forbidden because it taught that the earth moved, whereas the Bible said it never moved at any time. Geology is a thing abhorrent, because it teaches that the Mosaic creation is a myth or fable. Chemistry is a black art, and printing is the work of the devil. The Tree of Knowledge bears forbidden fruit.

which neither Adam and Eve, nor any of their sons and daughters, may so much as touch or taste, on pain of death.

But to return. Adam and Eve were forbidden to pluck the fruit of this one tree and taste it, and, of course, the prohibition naturally directed their attention to the tree, their curiosity was aroused, and, as the devil would have it, their curiosity became a masterless passion : Eve ate of the fruit of this forbidden tree, and, liking it over well, took it to Adam, and he ate of it also. There "Julian" begins. That is the *premier pas* of the Popular Religious Faith, which many thousand years afterwards, by Over-ruling Providence, called forth these papers in THE AGNOSTIC. God was angry that the man and woman made in his exact image had broken his prohibition. He cursed man to labour ever after for his daily food ; he cursed woman with the pains of child-birth ; he cursed the earth with noxious weeds and brambles ; he cursed the whole serpent tribe, because Satan assumed the form thereof, when he tempted the woman, and the curse extended even to heaven, for God was crucified on Calvary, because Adam and Eve, "made in the likeness of God," obeyed the Devil rather than God.

Now comes in Over-ruling Providence : Adam and Eve had hopelessly fallen ; they had learnt wisdom, by eating of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, and when driven out of Paradise they were told that the time would come when "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head." We will not say that prevention is better than cure ; but we may say confidently that this prophetic promise by Over-ruling Providence was an important step to this series of papers.

Adam and Eve in their exile had sons and daughters. The parents being tainted with sin, of course their children must be so likewise, for no one can bring fresh water out of a cistern full of brine, no one can bring a clean thing out of an unclean. The race grew worse and worse, till at length their sin was beyond endurance ; and Over-ruling Providence sent a flood to make a clean sweep of all things living on the earth. Four men and four women, with a male and female of every other animal, were alone preserved to perpetuate their kind. It would have been far better to have drowned all and made a new creation ; for, if the children of Adam could not escape the taint, how was it possible for the offspring of Noah to do so ? Noah was himself a tainted wether of the flock, and it was altogether a useless work to destroy the antediluvians, merely to reproduce the same race again after the Flood.

The whole earth was laid thirty feet under water, and the rain ceased. In a few weeks this immense body of water disappeared. Do you ask how ? Why, the earth, being a large thick plain, stretched over bottomless space, let the superfluous waters through, and then the chinks closed up again. God's ways are not our ways, neither are our ways his

ways. If man had planned it, he would have made the image of God like God himself, and so have kept him innocent, with a revolting abhorrence of sin, and then there would have been no fall, no expulsion from Paradise, no flood. But Over-ruling Providence, not to speak irreverently, is for ever tinkering, and getting into scrapes for the sake of getting out again. We speak of the Popular Religious Faith.

He made man in his own image ; but the image, being faulty, was tinkered up with a far-off promise. The flood came, and the race was destroyed to tinker it up again. The postdiluvians proved no better than their predecessors ; so the sacrifice on Calvary was made to tinker them up a third time. And now well nigh 2,000 years have gone by, and it is very questionable whether the morality of our modern Babylons is better than that ruled over by the Great King.

Noah and his family came forth from the ark, and found that the deep water, which had more or less prevailed for a whole year, had not injured vegetation, for the vines had ripe grapes ; and somehow the three young men knew how to press them into intoxicating wine. I have heard that the waiters of French restaurants concoct their *vin ordinaire* some half an hour before it is served up, and that they need no grapes for their concoction. So Shem, Ham, and Japheth had one advantage over the French victualers. But certainly it is not usual for grapes to grow and ripen under water.

It is not said how long after the Flood it was before Abraham was born ; but it is said that Sarah, his wife, was ninety years old when she brought forth her first child, Isaac. Isaac was the father of Jacob ; and Jacob had twelve sons, to one of which he gave a coat of many colours, to the disgust of his brothers. Over-ruling Providence availed itself of this hatred to send the lad into Egypt ; and a famine soon brought thither Jacob and all his children, with their households to the number of seventy souls. They settled in the land of Goshen, multiplied exceedingly, and when Moses was eighty years old they left Egypt in a body, with all their cattle, crossed over the Red Sea, dry-footed, and wandered for forty years in the Wilderness, when they passed over the River Jordan. A wholesale massacre ensued, and then Joshua distributed the lands of the slaughtered natives among his followers. The invaders grew rapidly in numbers, and at last chose Saul to be their king. Again Over-ruling Providence steps in, and sends a giant to defy the king's army, that David may enter upon the scene. David slew Goliath with a pebble picked from a brook, and succeeded to the throne. This David, "a man after God's own heart," fell in love with the wife of Uriah, the Hittite ; and, because there was no law of divorce at the time, he murdered Uriah in order to marry the widow. From this widow Jesus claimed descent in a direct line. Morally speaking, a worse pedi-

gree it would be difficult to find, for the majority of kings of Judah were scandalously bad—so bad, indeed, that Over-ruling Providence sent the whole nation into captivity to learn better behaviour from the Babylonians and Assyrians. After seventy years they returned no better than they were before, except perhaps that they abjured idolatry; but their God whom they served delivered them into the hands of the Romans. Still tinkering and still failing. Tinkered by a schism in the reign of Rehoboim, but not mended. Tinkered by captivity, but still no better than before. Tinkered by being given over to the Romans; but only to lead to the destruction of their city and their general dispersion. This is the Popular Religious Faith. As a history or sequence of events, nothing need be said; but, as a wise scheme of Over-ruling Providence, a more wretched failure it would be impossible to conceive.

The Romans appointed whomever they chose to rule their province. A proconsul ruled Syria, and a procurator under him was placed over Judea. The first procurator was Hyrcanus the High Priest, to whom was given the title of *prince*. The next was Antigonus, his nephew, who was entitled *King* of Judea. To him followed Herod, the Idumœan, also entitled king. On the death of Herod, Romans were appointed procurators—first Sabinus, then Copronius, then Marcus Ambivius, then Annius Rufus, then Valerius Gratus, and then Pontius Pilate (A.D. 26–36), the sixth of the Roman Governors.

While Herod the Idumœan was king a child was born, of poor parents, in a caravansary, or inn-yard, at Bethlehem. That babe was Jesus, the founder of the Christian religion, the “seed of the woman who was to bruise the serpent’s head.” He was crucified at the age of thirty-three, and his death, we are told, annulled the curse pronounced upon Adam. The mystery is this: If the curse could be so abolished, why was it suffered to operate, to the ruin of myriads of “immortal souls,” for 4,000 years? Why the Flood, when, by forestalling the Crucifixion, it might have been avoided? Why the hardships of captivity? Why the plagues of Egypt, and the exile for seventy years in Babylon? Why wait 2,000 years more before the remedy is generally available? Why go on patching and tinkering so long, when it must have been known in the counsels of Jehovah from the very first that none of these expedients would be of the least avail? Why try expedient after expedient, which Providence must have known would be worse than useless, seeing that only a new Adam could set the matter right? Most surely Over-ruling Providence seems to set up men of straw in order to knock them down again. Again we say, Such ways are not our ways, nor such thoughts our thoughts. It may be the Popular Religious Faith of Christendom; but indubitably it does not commend itself to common sense and right reason.

All this was done as a prelude to these papers in *THE AGNOSTIC*, by an unknown writer called "Julian." Creation, the Flood, the passage of the Red Sea, the murder of Uriah, the seventy years' captivity, the tragedy on Calvary, the 4,000 years before and the 2,000 years since, have all been planned by an Over-ruling Providence, with a special view to a series of papers in *THE AGNOSTIC*, in the year of grace 1885. *Parturiebat mons, formidabat Jupiter, ille vero murem peperit.* The whole world was created, God himself was put to death, that a "mouse" might cheep in *THE AGNOSTIC*.

If Jesus had not been crucified, this special religious faith would never have existed. If Adam had not fallen by disobedience, Jesus would never have been crucified. If Adam had not been made "in the image of God" and placed in Eden, he would never have eaten the forbidden fruit. If there had been no Eden, no Adam, no Fall, there would have been no Jesus, no Crucifixion, no Popular Religious Faith based upon these dogmas. If there had been no such Popular Religious Faith, there would have been no papers by "Julian" on the subject. So the world was created, Adam was set in Paradise, all the events of history leading up to the Crucifixion, by Over-ruling Providence, had led up to this literary parturition—a series of papers in a monthly journal called *THE AGNOSTIC*. Well, if that is not crushing a fly on a wheel, tell me what tinier end could have been produced. All creation groaning and travelling in labour until now to produce a "ridiculous mouse!"

JULIAN.

(*To be continued.*)

NOTES AND SCRAPS.

THE egregious egotist to whom we alluded last month as audaciously endeavouring, in the columns of our Agnostic contemporary, the *Secular Review*, to overthrow the bases of the Spencerian philosophy has fully justified our anticipations. His criticism, so far as we have read it, is characterised by overweening assertion, monstrous pretension, and vulgar bombast, enlivened here and there by doubtful humour and wild eccentricity. Moreover, we say advisedly that the writer is absolutely ignorant of Herbert Spencer's writings, and has evidently founded his virulent attack upon a rough summary of "First Principles." Our antagonist has unwisely challenged our contributor, "Ignotus," to defend the Spencerian philosophy, and we will only add—God help "Fra : Ollæ"!

Some of our more enthusiastic friends are trying to win professed adherents to Agnosticism in certain reputedly Freethought circles. While we have no intention to advise that our evangel be limited to the cultured few, we would counsel those who wish well to the cause with which this magazine is identified not to be imprudent in their propagandist efforts. Agnosticism, withal comprehensive and thorough in its teachings, will never flourish in the uncongenial field of purely destructive and reckless heresy. A thoughtful and judicial mind is indispensable to the acceptance of our faith or system, call it which you will, and those only who, having traversed the boisterous regions which encircle the Unknown, can complacently envisage the problems of origin and life are fitted or entitled to declare allegiance to the Agnostic philosophy.

Dr. Knighton, in the concluding portion of his paper on "The Philosophy of Epicurus and Modern Agnosticism," seems to argue that the attitude of Agnosticism is Materialistic. In this supposition he is certainly in error, and we shall be glad if some of our contributors will set the learned Doctor right in this matter.

On the 22nd of August the Editor of this magazine was summoned to serve on a jury at the Guildhall, and, as various versions of what transpired previous to our being empanelled have appeared in the London and provincial Press, it may be interesting and useful if we give our version of the, in many respects, remarkable proceedings.

The presiding judge was the Common Serjeant (Sir W. T. Charley,

Q.C.), and, at the invitation of our fellow jurymen, we consented to serve as foreman. On the officer of the court proceeding to administer the oath, we addressed the judge, remarking that we were placed in a difficulty, inasmuch as legally we were not entitled to affirm, and that, on the other hand, it was impossible for us to take the oath. Whereupon the following conversation ensued :—

The Common Serjeant.—How is that?

The Juryman.—Because I am an Agnostic, and have conscientious objections to the taking of an oath.

The Common Serjeant.—Well, I have no objection to your affirming.

The Juryman.—Then, my Lord, I will act as you advise.

The Serjeant-at-Mace then handed to us the Quaker form of affirmation, whereupon we said: My Lord, I am neither a Quaker nor a Christian; how can I affirm on this Quaker piece of cardboard?

The Serjeant-at-Mace.—That seems to be the only form of affirmation we have got.

The Common Serjeant.—The usual course in the Central Criminal Court is to take the ordinary form of oath, omitting the words, "So help me, God."

The Serjeant-at-Mace.—I find we have another form of affirmation which is sometimes taken; perhaps you would like to repeat that?

The Juryman (reading).—"I do solemnly and sincerely declare that the taking of an oath is, according to my religious belief"—but, my Lord, in the popular acceptance of the term, I have no religious belief; and I must respectfully decline to use words capable of a double meaning. Perhaps I can take this affirmation, and leave out the words, "religious belief"?

Ultimately we were permitted to compile our own form of affirmation, after which the jury were empanelled and the case proceeded.

Subsequently, as the result of some correspondence in the *Daily News* questioning the legality of the judge's ruling, Sir W. T. Charley requested us to retire from the jury-box, as he was doubtful whether his decision was strictly in accordance with the statute. Before doing so, however, he remarked on the inequality of the law as affecting unbelieving jurymen, and expressed himself strongly in favour of a removal of the disability. We may add that the Common Serjeant was most considerate and impartial throughout the incident; and we have exceeding pleasure in thus publicly acknowledging his kindness and courtesy.

We have received a copy of "An Appendix to the Principles of Sociology," by Herbert Spencer, and shall notice the booklet in our next issue. Our forthcoming number will also contain a review of an anonymous work, entitled "The Faith in Jesus Not a New Faith."

The Agnostic:

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF LIBERAL THOUGHT.

"The power which the universe manifests to us is utterly inscrutable."—HERBERT SPENCER.

"Agnosticism simply means that a man shall not say he knows or believes that which he has no scientific grounds for professing to know or believe.....Agnosticism says that we know nothing of what may be beyond phenomena."—PROF. HUXLEY.

"I think that generally (and more and more as I grow older), but not always, an Agnostic would be the more correct description of my state of mind."—CHARLES DARWIN.

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THE AGNOSTIC.

NOVEMBER, 1885.

AN AGNOSTIC REVERIE.

I HAVE often wondered, while walking through the wilderness of this world, how or why it is that the needful refreshment for the journey is not self-indicated ; that dwellers in a desert, such as we are, are not better acquainted, by the very pressure of necessity, with the secrets of our surroundings, and, if we cannot find the desert-wells, have not sufficient faith to strike the rock itself and bid the streams gush forth. There *must* be a corresponding satisfaction, or at least an answer, for every craving, something objective suited to the subjective blank ; there must be a draught for the earth-thirst somewhere, and if, as we have seen and known, there is no comfort and no help in the surface-world, the presumption is that a sub-surface-world exists which can endow us beyond all that we can ask or think.

Some one has written a book upon the sins and sorrows of the city—a record of ghastliness, squalor, and anguish, coloured with the moral purpose of abstinence from alcohol, and recommendatory of Sunday-schools and Supernaturalism. Another has indited much good matter in praise of the joys and gladness of rural life, and the simple delights of the fields and hedgerows. These writers keep much upon the surface of their several subjects, being mainly descriptive in style, and trusting to the effect of local colour to aid their purpose. It is wonderful, in both instances, how the phases of city and country life can be so superficially drawn as to appear photographed, every line faithfully rendered, and yet no colour and no life abiding in them. It would be possible for a man to tread the streets of this ideal city of squalor and thence to escape to that idyllic country, and yet to find no rest in either. Poet of the streets, poet of the woods, have no comfort to yield and no helpfulness, except that one poor counsel in praise of temperance beverages and a suggestion in favour of early rising. Such is our flatulent, latter-day gospel, warranted to heal and save.

Popular religion, popular literature, alike conspire to lead us astray—to evade the prime question as to showing us any good. The one cheats, the other mocks us. Of what avail is it to tell us—we of the tortured breast—that elsewhere and afterwards all will be well, that the secret passing understanding will be ours by-and-by, and that meanwhile the solacement of “Nature” is at hand and the sweet influences of morn and eve around us, when all the while our unrest is intensified not soothed, by the song “of harp or bird”?

Of the two—Supernatural Religion and Natural Religion (using these words in their customary significance)—the latter is the poorer by far. Better a dream, however wild, however hopelessly unrealisable than the bare and naked facts, the beggarly elements of life and living thrust upon us as the only verities. Better far that the houseless wanderer, ere he lies down to die, should glance upward and hope—though against hope—that he will inherit a home above in the infinite heavens, than that he should drag out a life accursed, mocked, night after night, by visions of open doors, lighted windows, and all the joyous surroundings of a dwelling. To be deluded is ever preferable to being tantalised. For Heaven will never come. Morning after morning the eastern fire will light the hill-tops and flush the sea; but the daylight shall never rise upon the new heavens and the new earth. Still the suspense is not cruel. We waited its coming—that ineffable dawn—much as one waits the delayed coming of some expected friend. He will come to-day, or to-morrow, or the day following, until, at last, expectation becomes resignation, and that which did not come might not come for evermore, or at least not until after the resting-time, and under other stars and beside another sea. But the “fiend’s arch-mock” is to tender us the material entity which *does* contain the needed comfort, and yet to deny us the inner part thereof. I suffer from the malady of unrest; there is a chalice before me, brimful of the specific remedy—only, instead of pressing the contents to my lips, you insist that I content myself with admiring the cup alone, encrusted with jewels indeed, but only the receptacle of the remedy, not the remedy itself.

These things are not hard to be understood. In that which is seen and felt *resides* the sufficiency for all things; but the outward portion, that which is known and knowable, comforts and succours not. It is that which is unknowable, the inner, hidden part, which contains the reserve which is all-in-all. Beside this two-fold entity there is nothing else—to help, comfort, hope for, or trust in. Even as in the old faith there were only the heavens above and the hells beneath—only the Eternal and the Adversary; so now there is only Life-inner and Life-outer—the sum of Being in that now-time which is the past, present, and future of Eternity. Men have sought, truly and rightly, in that

which *is* for comfort and support : their mistake has consisted in taking the seen and known for the whole of that which is ; and the seen and known by itself is comfortless and cold. There is a pathos in this ever-pursued, yet fruitless search, prosecuted unavailingly, yet always in the right, the only right, direction. O the pity of it, the pity of it, to think that men should hold in their very hands that which contains this pearl of price, and yet, because they do not know of it, should cast it all away, leaving themselves wholly poor !

If I were materialist in belief, seeking for satisfaction in the husks and hulls around me, and then awakened some day to find that, in the material objects which I viewed as the sole realities, there had existed all the while, unknown to me all the weary hours of my unavailing life, something more, inexplicable indeed and never to be revealed, yet necessary for my spiritual sustenance—the moment of that discovery would be, in truth, that of my “new birth,” so gladly would I find, in everything around me, new heavens and renovated earth. All the while I had been close to the ultimate truth, and had never known it. This is one of the sickening revulsions often experienced late in life, when the noontide has been spent unavailingly. Of all the wailing chords in life’s passion-music this refrain of “all the while” is the most yearning and wistful. All the while to have been loved with the love of earth, yet never to have known it ; all the while to have lived in the very bosom of the Infinite, and yet to have thought oneself a worm ; all the while to have drudged over a slavish task, and then to go down to the grave at noontide, unthankful and unrefreshed, not knowing that round us, above, beneath, the very God-breath has been pulsing warm ! Some seek for—they know not what—the hours of childhood once more, the happy dreams of youth. Ah, no ! let us wish instead for an earlier foretaste of that later, clearer vision, which, being ours, shall transfigure life, and front unterrified the coming of death.

The heritage of my new birth is that I know in part—in part only. Thus to me that which to others seems abortive, sin-smitten, and unavailing, is not without hope. With profound pity and compassion I view the hideous deformities, the blighted step-children of the stony streets. As gladly would I stretch forth my hand to pluck and save as if they were my own flesh and blood ; as willingly bleed for them as if I were the crucified, bearing the sins and sorrows of a world. But, besides this, besides the pity I feel and the wish to save, I also know that these woes and pangs, the fruit of forces I am powerless to avert, have their birth, their being, and their grave encircled with mystery—mystery which will not stay till I can divide it into good and evil. It matters not to me that some find these social plague-spots irreconcilable with a benevolent plan and purpose which they have super-imposed upon

natural laws, as I postulate no benevolence to begin with. It is nothing to me that these evils form a tremendous problem to be wrought out in the light of clearer knowledge. The solution may be known in time—it may not. So much of the world lieth to me in mystery, as well as in wickedness, that I cannot tell. This only I know, that those who profess to have the exclusive property in all-availing, sacred salves for the social malady are either unskilled in their employment, or unwilling to use them.

And in the other picture we have spoken of something more is mine in the gay landscape, the blossoming hedges, and the flowery plain, than meets the eye of the superficial observer. If in the city less gloomily didactic than the missionary, in the woods I am more inclined to reverie than the naturalist. Where there is the least motion and stir there is the more suggestion of the unseen. The air is heavy with the scent of flowers—the brooding calm favours meditation. I am alone (for light, fragrance, colour, these are but mine), yet not alone, for what companies with me at this instant? what spiritual garment trails athwart me? what voice is whispering in my ear? The silence oppresses. I turn gladly to the crowded city—there, at least, I am less face to face with that which cannot be shaken, but remains.

Thus the test of reality, of a right and true view of life and living, is to find everything, not rounded and complete, but pieced like an imperfect mosaic. The criterion of truthfulness is seeming imperfection: discords for harmony, the broken curves for the circle. We distrust the way which is clear and open to the ending. For us either way—the viewless path of spirit, or the track of the material—progress is barred. Neither by faith nor by sight can man attain the goal. Materialism, mysticism, severally pursued, will not avail. The latter is endlessly repelled by the evidence of sense—lies open continually to contradiction and to denial; the former, plain and evident though it seems, is again mocked and flouted by its own ultimate unreality. Both, however, joined and mutually balanced, include the sum of things. Not that the result is capable of being expressed, only that the process can be carried no further. Here, for us, the task has ending. More we cannot know; but the thought is not a mournful one, for enough is ours.

It is because of this, our all-inclusive persuasion, that we venture—we whose lives are two-fold, one of flesh and sense, the other of mystery and spirit—to include, in our confession of faith, all the fulness, all the language and aspiration, of spiritual religion, ancient and modern. To this use and habit of mind and speech we lay indisputable claim. In our case the language of no other faith is travestied; it is lifted up and translated to a nobler region. Our life in the flesh is as abundant as that which Christianity enforced; our spiritual aspiration is more abundant

by far. Every other phase of spiritual endeavour, aspiration, life, has its aim and its ending, its set form of expression, and its necessary repetitions. Ours has none of these. And it were a mockery to deny us, for our unspoken litany of the Unknowable, one phrase, one word of hallowed ecstasy, whatever its origin, seeing that with us alone these have their real meaning and true consecration, though placed as offerings upon no material altar. It is meet and right that the nobler faith, using the language, if not the symbols, of a faith less exalted, should therein, if it can and will, find fit expression. And when type and symbol fail, when expression becomes impossible, it is not because the former are ineffectual and poor, or the latter unworthy, but because there are verities—the secrets of the unfathomable—of and for which there is no type and no symbol at all.

G. M. McC.

THE AGE OF THE EARTH AND OF LIVING THINGS.

AMONG the orthodox this question is settled with as much ease as the huckster settles, by a reference to his Ready Reckoner, the value of things bought or sold. The Christian, on being interrogated on the subject, refers the questioner to Moses, who, to the ordinary "believer," is the mystic seer who possesses the key to the great problems of origin and existence. So long as confidence remains undisturbed by doubt or investigation, this answer is considered conclusive; and to dispute it involved, early in the present century, considerable spiritual and bodily peril. The orthodox, finding people dissatisfied with the old notion of creation beginning on the first day, early in the morning, in the year one—counting backwards 6,000 years—proceeded to elongate the days of the first week; but, that failing to meet the difficulty, they placed an indefinite period *before the first day*. It is quite obvious that, if scientific investigation had not demanded more than six thousand years for the production of the earth and of living things, the reading of Moses, as translated in English, and construed according to the ordinary rules, would never have suggested the first week to be more or any other than six ordinary working days and nights. After reading over again the various attempts to interpret Moses so as to give an indefinite period to the time he mentions, I remain of opinion that the plain grammatical reading of our English Bible is that all things originated in the first week. That it was so understood and expounded for hundreds of years by persons whose profession it was to preach and explain it, is at least some confirmation of my view.

The two great lights, one to rule over the day and the other to rule over the night, indicate the division of time which now prevails in England and other parts of the world. No one, outside the inquiring and scientific, questions, even to-day, the statement that it always was so from the beginning of the world. But, having got our first week, we are still without any answer to the question, *When was that?* If Moses lived to-day, and wrote a book on the subject, and fixed the date at 6,000 years ago, or thereabouts, he might be accepted as an authority, or he might not. But, as a dry matter of fact, he has been dead hundreds of years, and is, therefore, no authority on the subject, except

in so far as he wrote about what was believed in his time, or what he believed himself. The calculations on which the date of the first week has been fixed were made by others, and not by Moses ; so that, practically, he is out of the reckoning altogether. If this had not been so, the religious world has recently furnished evidence that Moses did not write the account at all, but that it existed long before his time. This point is maintained in a work issued by the Sunday School Union ("Conversations on Evolution"), in which a discussion is sustained by different persons with a view to satisfy the mind of a young gentleman who had been made sceptical by reading Professor Huxley. One singular inference made by the writer in support of the reliability of Moses is worthy of comment. While the authorship is shifted from Moses and his age to some unknown authors of a previous age, we are asked to rely upon Moses because he has handed down to us these pre-existing accounts as he found them ! The logic of this is simply charming, seeing that the fact of his handing them down is only evidence of their prior existence ; but, in order to prove this, we are compelled to admit, without proof, that Moses did hand them down. The value I attach to this little volume, emanating from such a source, is that it lays a subject open to discussion which it was formerly considered a sin to doubt and a crime to dispute.

That attempts have been made to estimate the age of the earth may be seen in the figures found in the margins of our Bibles ; but by whom they were placed there it is difficult to discover. It seems probable that some of our Universities introduced them two hundred years ago. They were arrived at by calculating the ages of men and the occurrence of events—all of which have been disputed in the present century.

Endless variety of opinion has prevailed as to the Creation : one writer found three hundred different opinions in regard to it. One thing should be borne in mind : the writers all had the same source open to them—the alleged writings of Moses. Taking only a few of the dates arrived at, according to leading authorities, their variations are so great as to make them historically only equal to guesses, as regards the age of mankind alone. The year 1884, since the Creation, varies, according to their reckoning, as follows :—Scaliger, 5,833 ; Usher and Blair, 5,888 ; Julian period, 6,577 ; Josephus, 7,286 ; Dr. Hales, 7,295 ; Modern Greek Calendar, 7,392 ; "Universal History," 8,868—the difference being nearly 3,000 years. The *British Quarterly Review*, referring to calculations made by over one hundred different persons (who regarded the Scriptures with most sincere reverence, and from which they derived their arguments), states that they differ "*more than three thousand years.*" Of sacred history, according to orthodox

authorities, we may justifiably express an opinion in the words of Bonaparte—that it is but fable agreed upon.

The Duke of Argyll is permitted to write in *Good Words* that the Hebrew, Samaritan, and Septuagint differ from each other “by many centuries,” and that, “where differences exist of such magnitude, *no confidence can be felt in any of the results.*” He questions whether the Bible is, or was intended to be, “more than the history of typical men and of typical generations” (“Primeval Man,” p. 35).

Dr. J. H. Gladstone puts it still more vaguely: the list of names is not even of men or generations, but of *nations*, “one nation being said to have begotten other nations.” Clergymen and Sunday-school teachers who tell the rising generation that the Bible gives a truthful account of the age of the world and of man are hardly in harmony with their friends here quoted.

If we take the history of nations before the Christian era, the best guides do not carry us back to very remote periods. The Greeks and Romans take us twelve centuries, the Aryans twenty-eight, the Chinese say thirty; the Egyptians, according to Mariette Bey, fifty; so that, estimating man's life to average twenty-five years, we arrive at only 280 generations of men, or seven thousand years for the life of nations. It must be remembered, however, that we are not alluding to the *origin* of nations—much less to the origin of man—but simply to the fact that there existed at that time a people with a knowledge of writing, and capable of raising monuments attesting their existence before the orthodox Adam.

We have seen how modern the data for answering our question is by an appeal to the history of nations; let us now see what the students of language can do for us. Philologists are agreed that, however far we trace back one language to another, we never arrive at a primitive tongue. Assyrian, Phœnician, Hebrew, and Arabic are all sister tongues, pointing to an unknown parent. The ancient languages of Babylon and China are known to have been separate from the Aryan and Semitic families 4,000 years ago. Human speech dates back, like people, beyond the beginning of nations and of their inscriptions. The time required for the development of nations is great, but that of human speech must necessarily be anterior to it. The Duke of Argyll says: “Those who have studied the growth of languages.....are lost in conjecture as to the lapse of time which may probably have been required for the wonderful creations of human speech.” The philologist in the earliest history finds languages not only completed, arrived at a state of maturity, but bearing marks of long and gradual development through ages of the mind's progress. The evidence of this to him is as plain and conclusive as the growth and inner structure of a tree

are indicative of its age to the naturalist. Chevalier Bunsen estimates the time required to form the Chinese language at 5,000 years, begun some 22,000 years back. Our own family of languages—the Indo-European—he supposes to have been gradually formed since so recent a time as 9,000 years ago, while for the Turanian he grants 17,000 years. The English language affords an excellent source of study to those who watch the growth of speech. Let them compare the words introduced at, and since, the time of Bacon and Shakespeare with what can be found in the literature that preceded that time.

J. W. Dawson, L.L.D., F.R.S., F.G.S., wrote in *Leisure Hour*, in 1880, under the title “Fossil Men,” some comforting words on the orthodox view of this question. He finds men in this critical and sceptical age no longer satisfied with traditions, or even with *sacred* history itself. The result has been the accumulation of facts from every available source, which has produced “a general *vague impression* that science has unsettled all our previous views as to the origin and antiquity of man. While popular writers have boldly asserted this last conclusion as established beyond dispute, the more cautious, and those who have the *best opportunities of weighing the evidence*, are well aware of its doubtful and uncertain character; and the attempt *recently* made by one of the *greatest* and most *judicial minds* (Lyell) to sum up the actual results, while it startles the reader with the magnitude and strangeness of the questions suggested, appals him with their complexity and difficulty” (p. 3). It is fairly open to question if Mr. Dawson is more able, or more cautious, than Sir C. Lyell, who is, on his own authority, “one of the greatest and most judicial.” Mr. Dawson does not dispute that the land and sea have changed places in Europe, or that remains of man found indicate pre-historic man. Before the time of the men whose canoes and implements have been found in the estuaries of the Clyde and Forth, he places a continental period when the beds of the German Ocean and the Irish Sea were dry land, and men had been able to walk to Britain; but he is “still in uncertainty as to the absolute time involved” (p. 232).

But he previously places a limit, on the evidence of geology, as to the residence of man in Europe, the limit being not longer than 6,000 years (p. 228). If that be admitted, it certainly “unsettles our previous views” that there was only one man alive at that time, in the garden of Eden, which was not in Europe, if it was anywhere. Not only so, but it “unsettles our previous views” founded on the Septuagint version of sacred history, that every man on the face of the earth, except eight persons, was drowned one thousand years later than when Mr. Dawson places his “residence in Europe.” This able and cautious authority is very suggestive as to the cause of modern changes in Europe: “The

last of these oscillations *may have been the traditional deluge*" (p. 248). Dr. Watts, in his "Logic," lays down a rule which applies to this—"things that may be may not be." If we accept this, all men, 4,000 years ago, were alike, and belonged to one family. Now, to say nothing as to what type they represented, we have the pictures of Egyptians, Negroes, Nubians, and Asiatics 3,300 years ago as distinct as they are to-day, leaving 900 years only for their development from the sons of Noah!

Apart from the uncertainty as to when the deluge took place, and also the probable effects, does it interfere with known facts in the historic period? Is there any evidence which negatives the assertion? I think there is reliable evidence that no important change has taken place on the face of the globe during the historic period. Lieutenant Colonel Drayson has shown clearly there has been no change in climate in Egypt, Central Asia, or India, during the past 8,000 years. From recorded eclipses it is argued that no alteration in the mean temperature of the globe has taken place during the past 2,500 years. Assuming Moses to be the most ancient writer, or that the books bearing his name give an account of events dating 6,000 years back, what do we learn? That the vine and the palm flourished in Palestine. But they do so still. Moreover, for these both to ripen in the same country, it requires a certain temperature, which now prevails in that country, and which must, therefore, have been the same in the time referred to in the books of Moses. Professor Heer maintained that the vine is an archæval inhabitant of Europe. As regards the time when the land and sea assumed their present relations, and the continents assumed their present, or similar, conformations, it must be very remote. There are, according to Mr. M. Ponton, in the course of formation, on the coast of Florida, coral reefs, constructed continuously of the same species of polyp, and their average rate of progress can be carried back 30,000 years. The same time is arrived at by calculating the attrition of the rocks by the action of the celebrated falls of Niagara.

Agassiz, describing the low portion of the peninsula of Florida, estimates the growth of the coral reefs to have taken 135,000 years to form the southern half of it.

Sir Charles Lyell, giving estimates made by American discoverers puts the delta of the Mississippi, at the lowest, at 100,000 years.

Professor Geikie argues as to the beginning of the Palæolithic age, that it must date back from the present time some 200,000 years. The method by which Mr. Dawson discounts the estimates of other observers is strictly in harmony with his view about the work that may have been done by the Deluge. The difficulty presented by the fact that the bed of stalagmite in Kent's Cavern would require half a million years to form he almost ignores, remarking that "observations in

other caverns show that, under *favourable* circumstances, beds of this thickness *might* be formed in a thousand years" (p. 245). Of course, it might, and indeed it not only might, but certainly would, have completely filled up the cavern in question. Again, Boucher de Perthes calculates the growth of peat at Abbeville to give a period of 20,000 years for its accumulation. Mr. Dawson replies that "peat, where circumstances favour its growth, *may* accumulate more than two feet in a century..... And *if* the time for the growth of the peat *has* been exaggerated, so has that for the older excavation and deposition." This reminds one of the wise remark of Shakespeare: "Your *if* is the only peacemaker: much virtue in *if*." As a matter of fact, peat not only *may* grow two feet in a century, but does grow two inches in a year; and the mean annual growth for 443 years is given as 1.26. What should we think of an able and cautious weigher of evidence who argued that the marriageable age of women in England was not twenty, because in India it has been found to be as early as thirteen years! As regards the accumulation of stalagmites, there is no doubt that it varies; but, if we grant the rapidity demanded, the whole argument collapses, because every cavern would have been filled up ages ago. Caution is good, Mr. Dawson; but the evidence weighed by the "judicial mind" of Lyell has my preference.

CHARLES C. CATTELL.

(*To be concluded next month.*)

EVOLUTION AND SPECIAL CREATION.

SECOND PAPER.

The Beginning of Life upon the Earth.—Evolution has been subject to many severe attacks at this point. Those who contend for special creation have maintained, with a dogmatism which but ill accords with the knowledge they possess upon the subject, that nothing but the hypothesis of the supernatural origin of things is sufficient to account for the first appearance of life upon the earth, that evolution completely breaks down here, and that all the experiments that have been conducted with a view to lend it support have turned out positive failures. Such is the allegation of orthodox opponents. Let us see what grounds they have for these reckless and dogmatic statements. The two views of the origin of living beings have been called respectively *Biogenesis* and *Abiogenesis*, the first meaning that life can only spring from prior life, and the latter that life may sometimes have its origin in dead matter. Dr. Charlton Bastian, whose experiments will be hereafter referred to, substitutes for *Abiogenesis* another word, *Archebiosis*.

Now, it is well known and admitted on all hands that there was a time when no life existed on the earth. Not the most minute animal, or the most insignificant plant, found a place on the surface of what was probably at that time a globe heated up to a temperature at which no living thing could exist. The life, therefore, that did afterwards appear could not have sprung from germs of prior living bodies. True the whimsical theory was put forward by an eminent scientific man, some years ago, that the first germs that found their way to the earth were probably thrown off from some other planet with meteoric matter. But on the face of it this is absurd, because such matter would be of too high a temperature to admit of the existence upon it of living bodies of any kind, and, besides, were it otherwise, it would explain nothing. It would only transfer the difficulty from this world to some other. For life must have had a beginning somewhere, and the question is as to that beginning somewhere. The supernaturalist seeks to get out of the difficulty rather by cutting the Gordian knot than by untying it, and falls back upon a special creation, and so avoids any further trouble about the matter. But the evolutionist thinks that he can see his way

clearly in what must necessarily be to some extent a labyrinth, because no one lived at that time to observe and record what was taking place. One thing is clear, which is, that living things were made or came into existence—whatever the mode may have been, or the power by which it occurred—out of non-living matter. Even the believers in special creation will not deny this. The only question is, therefore, whether the process occurred in accordance with natural law, and whether the forces by which it was brought about were those which exist, or, at all events, which did exist, in material nature. For it does not follow that, if such phenomena do not occur to-day, they could never have taken place in the past. The conditions of the earth were different then to what they are now, and forces may have been in operation that are now quiescent. Professor Huxley, who thinks that no instance has occurred in modern times of the evolution of a living organism from dead matter, and that the experiments that have been conducted on the subject are inconclusive—who, in fact, ranks himself on the side of the advocates of *Biogenesis*—yet says that, if we could go back millions of years to the dawn of life, we should, no doubt, behold living bodies springing from non-living matter.

But, of course, it will be argued that, if it happened then, it might take place now; and although, as I have said, this is not conclusive, yet, to some, it has much weight. What Nature has done once she can do again. Quite so; but, then, all the conditions must be the same. Dr. Bastian himself asks the question, "If such synthetic processes took place then, why should they not take place now? Why should the inherent molecular properties of various kinds of matter have undergone so much alteration?" ("Beginnings of Life"). And the question is likely to be repeated, with, to say the least of it, some show of reason.

It must never be forgotten, as Tyndall has very ably pointed out, that the matter of which the organic body is built up "is that of inorganic nature. There is no substance in the animal tissues that is not primarily derived from the rocks, the water, and the air." And the forces operating in the one are those which we see working in the other, vitality only excepted, which is probably only another correlation of the one great force of the universe. Indeed, Professor Huxley does not make an exception even in the case of vitality, which, he maintains, has no more actual existence than the imaginary aqueousness of water. Mr. Herbert Spencer thinks that life, under all its forms, has arisen by an unbroken evolution, and through natural causes alone; and this view accords with the highest reason and philosophy.

Nor have the experiments performed with a view to settle questions been so conclusive as would appear to some. At all events, the question

is an open one as to whether the origin of living things in non-living matter has not been experimentally demonstrated. The old doctrine of "spontaneous generation" has, in its new form and under its recent name of *Abiogenesis*, or *Archebiosis*, some men of great eminence in the scientific world at the present time on its side. Pouchet, a very illustrious Frenchman, performed a large number of experiments, and in all of most of them he succeeded, according to his own opinion, in producing living things. The objection that there were germs in the air, or water, or the materials that he employed, he met by manufacturing artificial water out of oxygen and hydrogen, and submitting the whole of the material employed to a temperature above boiling-water point, which would certainly destroy any living germ, either of an animal or vegetable character. Then, in England, a series of experiments have been performed by Dr. Bastian, one of the leading scientists of our time; and the results have been given to the world in some voluminous and masterly books. "These volumes," says an opponent—Dr. Elam—"are full of the records of arduous, thoughtful, and conscientious work, and must ever contain a conspicuous place in the literature of biological science." Dr. Bastian maintains that he has succeeded, in innumerable instances, in producing living organisms from non-living matter. Hence the doctrine of Evolution, which is in accordance with true philosophy, finds its support in that physical science where we should expect to meet with it, and to which it really belongs.

Diversity of Living Things.—The naturalistic theory usually adopted at the present day to explain the diversities of structure and form met with in living beings is that set forth by Mr. Darwin, and called "Natural Selection." But this is not the only one known to men of science. Others preceded it, and more, no doubt, will follow. Evolution is independent of all these, and yet it may obtain support from any one of them. Having reached living organisms, of either animal or vegetable character, the problem that presents itself for solution is the method by which they may develop into the multiplicity of forms that we now meet with upon the earth. Haeckel, one of the most enthusiastic of the scientific evolutionists living, tells us that we can, by means of evolution, give a mechanical explanation of the most complicated of organic phenomena. "In fact," he says, "such events as the origin and formations of the organ of the senses present to the eye of the understanding, guided by the light of evolution, no more difficulties than the explanation of any ordinary process, such as earthquakes, winds, or tides." Life, according to this author, is simply mechanical force, and the supposed difference between the living body and non-living matter he wipes out. Evolution sets forth the doctrine that all forms of animal and vegetable life have been successively developed from the lowest

organism. From these low organic bodies we now start, and proceed to account for higher and more complex structures.

As early as the latter end of the last century the great German philosopher and poet, Goethe, taught that all the higher forms of living beings had developed from the lower ; and some ten years later he considerably expanded the idea from investigation in embryology, a branch of science which throws a flood of light upon the subject. Subsequently, he was followed in the same field by Oken, the discoverer of what is termed transcendental anatomy, a doctrine most closely allied to evolution, and lending it very important support. Some of Oken's theories were very whimsical ; but, on the whole, he was a man of profound scientific knowledge and marvellous insight. Mr. Darwin's theory came afterwards, and it is certainly superior to any of those that preceded it, because it has its basis in the known facts of natural history. This truth will be conceded even by those who dispute the conclusions arrived at, and who hold to the dictum of special creation. In fact, we may say with Huxley that "there is but one hypothesis as to the origin of species of animals in general which has any scientific existence—that propounded by Mr. Darwin" ("Man's Place in Nature"). That hypothesis is now pretty well known ; but a brief description of it may prove interesting.

The rate of increase among animals and plants is so great as to render it an absolute certainty that millions must perish every year. Even elephants and others of the very slowest breeding of all animals would soon overstock the countries where they dwell, and even the world itself, were not large numbers destroyed. As to the plants, Huxley has shown that, if we started with only one to-day, and all the seeds which it gives off should grow, the same thing happening to each new plant thus produced in turn, in nine years all the dry land on the surface of the earth would be covered. Of course this does not occur, and the reason is obvious : myriads of plants are every year destroyed, so that each species is kept in proper bounds. This gives rise to what is known by the term, "the struggle for existence," and the result is that the strongest, or those in some way best adapted to the environment, remain, while the rest disappears. Herbert Spencer calls this "the survival of the fittest." Now, that this occurs few, if any, persons will deny. The only ground upon which any dispute may arise will be, how far changes can occur in any organism by this law ? Mr. Darwin has shown that in all organic bodies there is a tendency to vary. No single offspring of an animal will be exactly like its parents, and the variation, however small it may be, may go on increasing generation after generation until the newly-acquired characteristics may completely overbalance the old ones. This principle is well enough understood by the breeders of cattle, and by

horticulturists, who take advantage of it to produce, if not a new species, yet a variety differing very considerably from that from which it sprung. The four great breeds of pigeons all came from one stock, differing very much from either of the original parents—as much, in fact, as they differ from each other. This change has been brought about by what Darwin calls methodical selection—that is, the destroying any young which might show indications of a partial return to the original stock. Acting on this principle, the cattle-breeder, the dog-fancier, the gardener, and others, produce new and choice varieties of the particular organism with which they have to deal. The most beautiful flowers and the most delicate fruits in our gardens have been thus evolved out of wild plants lacking all the charming qualities of their descendants. So in the case of the domestic animals, how wide is the difference between the pig, the goose, the duck, etc., and the original stock from which they sprung. True in all these cases the agency of man has been employed to bring about the change, and his intellect has guided the natural power which is thus turned to such useful account. But as man does not of himself make the change, but only selects under natural law, the same thing could go on without him did the demand for it arise. Say, for example, that a change takes place which favours the animal in obtaining its food, then it is clear that such an altered condition, however slight, would give it an advantage in the struggle for life, and tend to perpetuate its existence, while those individuals which remained in their original state would, being subject to less favourable conditions, die and disappear.

Now, according to the theory of natural selection, this variability enabling the individual organisms in which it occurs to live, while others of the same species die, may go on increasing through untold generations, until an organism is produced the species of which will be entirely different from the one in which it had its origin at the first. The slow accumulation of different parts in the changes which take place thus gives rise in the end to new species, and even to distinct genera and orders. The same law which we see daily producing new varieties will in longer periods originate different species, and in still more extended time give rise to new genera, orders, and even classes. Thus, beginning with the lowest organisms, we arrive in time at all those marvellous forms of living things with which we are acquainted.

This, in a few words, is Mr. Darwin's theory of Natural Selection, and how it favours evolution will be apparent to the most superficial thinker. It must be borne in mind, as already stated, that, even if Darwin's theory is not the correct one, evolution is not thereby proved to be wrong. The facts upon which Natural Selection is based are too numerous to deal with in detail when the general questions of evolution are being discussed. Those who desire to pursue the subject cannot

do better than to carefully study Mr. Darwin's own books, and then they will be struck with his marvellous knowledge, profound thought, extraordinary insight, clear perspicuity, and, above all, his lucid way of stating his case.

A mere glance at the geological records will show at once that the order in which animals and plants have appeared on the earth is that which accords with evolution. The lowest came first, the highest last, and a regular gradation between the two extremes. In the early rocks in which life appears we meet with polypas, coral, sea-worms, etc., and no trace of land animals or plants. Then, passing upwards, we come upon fishes, then reptiles, afterwards birds, subsequently mammals, and, last of all, man. These are undisputed facts, as the most elementary works on geology, whether written by a professing Christian or an unbeliever, will clearly show.

The only objection, perhaps, of any weight that can be urged against the changes which evolution asserts to have taken place is the fact that we do not see them occur. But this, in the first place, is hardly correct, since we see the tadpole—which is a fish breathing through gills, and living in the water—pass up into a reptile—the frog—which is a land-animal breathing through lungs, and inhaling its oxygen from the atmosphere. Secondly, the fact that we do not see a change actually occur which took millions of years to become effected can surely amount to nothing. An ephemeral insect, whose life only lasts for a day, could it reason, might object that an acorn could not grow into an oak tree, because it had not seen it occur. But the evidence would be there still in the numerous gradations that might be seen between the acorn and the sturdy old tree that had weathered the storms of a century. And in this case we see all the gradations between a monad and a man in the rock which time has left in the history of the past, although, as our lives are so short, we are not able to see the whole change effected.

Here, as elsewhere, Evolution stands in direct opposition to special acts of creation. Plants were not all suddenly called into existence at one particular period, and then animals at another and later time. This we know, because the remains of plants and animals are found side by side throughout all the rocks. If there be an exception, it is an unfortunate one for the Christian supernaturalist, since it shows that animals were first; for certain it is that animal remains are met with in the oldest rocks. Thus Evolution stands firm in this particular, despite the orthodox statement to the contrary.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded next month.)

HERBERT SPENCER'S PHILOSOPHY: AN EXPOSITION.

XI.

"FIRST PRINCIPLES."

EVOLUTION : ITS RATIONALE.

THAT Evolution is a process embracing all orders of phenomena we have already seen. It remains now to be shown that there is an underlying principle co-extensive with this process. Having first noted how each of the factors of this process works separately—how Matter, Motion, and Force, operating in Space and in Time, each produces its own result ; and having next noted what is the joint result of their combined workings, we have now to ask *why* this joint result is what we have seen it to be. In order to make knowledge perfectly coherent, we are bound to find a *rationale* of the all-embracing transformations called Evolution ; for to fail in this is to fall short of that completely-unified knowledge which constitutes the Agnostic Philosophy. Just as Kepler's numerous general laws were eventually interpreted as corollaries from the one wide law of gravitation, so the large generalisations of Evolution are interpretable as corollaries from the persistence of Force. Given the persistence of Force, the process of Evolution could not but be what we have seen that it is, and could not but exhibit those features which we have shown that it possesses. And this most complex process is determined by precisely the same law as that which regulates the simplest movement around us, from a thought-throb or a heart-beat to a water-bubble or a watch-tick.

In other words, it has to be shown that the phenomena of Evolution are deducible from the persistence of Force. "This being the ultimate truth which transcends experience by underlying it, so furnishing a common basis on which the widest generalisations stand, these widest generalisations are to be unified by referring them to this common basis. Already the truths manifested throughout concrete phenomena of all orders," that relations among forces persist, that there is equivalence among transformed forces, and that motion is universally rhythmic, "we have found to be severally deducible from the persistence of force ; and

this affiliation of them on the persistence of force has reduced them to a coherent whole. Here we have similarly to affiliate the universal traits of Evolution, by showing that, given the persistence of Force, the redistribution of Matter and Motion necessarily proceeds in such way as to produce them ; and by doing this we shall unite them as co-relative aspects of one law, at the same time that we unite this law with the foregoing simpler laws."

In order to trace to the persistence of Force the total number of changes constituting Evolution, it will be well to split up the process into its factors. These factors are : the instability of the Homogeneous, the multiplication of Effects, Segregation, and Equilibration. Let us consider each of them separately.

First, then, what is meant by the instability of the Homogeneous ? "The phrase *unstable equilibrium* is one used in mechanics to express a balance of forces of such kind that the interference of any further force, however minute, will destroy the arrangement previously subsisting, and bring about a totally different arrangement. Thus, a stick poised on its lower end is in unstable equilibrium : however exactly it may be placed in a perpendicular position, as soon as it is left to itself it begins, at first imperceptibly, to lean on one side, and with increasing rapidity falls into another attitude. Conversely, a stick suspended from its upper end is in stable equilibrium : however much disturbed, it will return to the same position." Hence, by the instability of the Homogeneous, we mean that the state of homogeneity, like the state of the stick poised on its lower end, is one that is not permanent—that cannot be maintained.

The instability of the Homogeneous is apparent throughout the whole range of phenomena. Here are some examples. "Of mechanical ones the most familiar is that of the scales. If they be accurately made, and not clogged by dirt or rust, it is impossible to keep a pair of scales perfectly balanced : eventually one side will descend and the other ascend—they will assume a heterogeneous relation." As it is with the evolution of mechanics, so it is with the evolution of species. Regarding the assemblage of organisms forming a species, "we have abundant materials for the induction that each species will not remain uniform, but is ever becoming to some extent multiform.' In mental evolution the lapse of the homogeneous into the heterogeneous is equally marked. Take the case of language. "In the old times *miscreant* is used in its etymological sense of *unbeliever* ; but in modern speech it has entirely lost this sense. Similarly with *evil-doer* and *malefactor* : exactly synonymous as these are by derivation, they are no longer synonymous by usage : by a *malefactor* we now understand a convicted criminal, which is far from being the acceptation of *evil-doer*.

The verb *produce* bears in Euclid its primary meaning—to *prolong*, or *draw out*; but the now largely-developed meanings of *produce* have little in common with the meanings of *prolong*, or *draw out*. In the Church of England liturgy an odd effect results from the occurrence of *prevent* in its original sense—to *come before*, instead of its modern specialised sense—to *come before with the effect of arresting*. But the most conclusive cases are those in which the contrasted words consist of the same parts differently combined; as in *go under* and *undergo*. We *go under* a tree, and we *undergo* a pain. Habit has so far modified their meanings that we cannot without absurdity speak of *undergoing* a tree, and *going under* a pain." In all these instances terms which were once homogeneous in their meanings are now heterogeneous, and the instability of the Homogeneous is thus exhibited. "Should any difficulty be felt in understanding how these mental changes exemplify a law of physical transformations that are wrought by physical forces, it will disappear on contemplating acts of mind as nervous functions. It will be seen that each loss of equilibrium is a loss of functional equality between some two elements of the nervous system. And it will be seen that, as in other cases, this loss of functional equality is due to the difference in the incidence of forces."

The change from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous, when commenced, can never cease. "The absolutely homogeneous must lose its equilibrium; and the relatively homogeneous must lapse into the relatively less-homogeneous;" and these changes are all necessary consequences of the persistence of Force.

The second factor in the evolutionary process—the multiplication of Effects—like the first factor, has its origin in the persistence of Force. We have seen how, through the unequal exposure of its parts to environing forces, every homogeneous aggregate must become heterogeneous. We have now to mark how, through the action, re-action, and interaction of all the parts on one another, the heterogeneous must produce an immense variety of results. Hence the multiplication of Effects means the production by a single cause of many consequents.

Look at the vast complexity of the effects wrought by the simple act of lighting a candle. "Primarily, this is a chemical change consequent upon a rise of temperature. The process of combination having once been set going by extraneous heat, there is a continued formation of carbonic acid, water, etc.—in itself a result more complex than the extraneous heat that first caused it. But along with this process of combination there is a production of heat, there is a production of light, there is an ascending column of gases generated, there are currents established in the surrounding air. Nor does the decomposition of one

force into many forces end here. Each of the several changes worked becomes the parent of further changes. The carbonic acid formed will, by and bye, combine with some base, or, under the influence of sunshine, give up its carbon to the leaf of a plant. The water will modify the hygrometric state of the air around, or, if the current of hot gases containing it come against a cold body, will be condensed, altering the temperature, and perhaps the chemical state of the surface it covers. The heat given out melts the subjacent tallow and expands whatever it warms. The light, falling on various substances, calls forth from them re-actions by which it is modified, and so divers colours are produced. Similarly even with these secondary actions, which may be traced out into ever-multiplying ramifications, until they become too minute to be appreciated."

Notice, next, the multitudinous effects produced by that single cause, the locomotive engine. "This, as the proximate cause of our railway system, has changed the face of the country, the course of trade, and the habits of the people. Consider, first, the complicated sets of changes that precede the making of every railway—the provisional arrangements, the meetings, the registration, the trial-section, the parliamentary survey, the lithographed plans, the books of reference, the local deposits and notices, the application to Parliament, the passing Standing-Orders Committee, the first, second, and third readings—each of which brief heads indicates a multiplicity of transactions—and the further development of secondary occupations (as those of engineers, surveyors, lithographers, parliamentary agents, share-brokers), and the execution of sundry others (as those of traffic-takers, reference-takers). Consider, next, the more marked changes implied in railway construction—the cuttings, tunnellings, diversions of roads; the building of bridges and stations, the laying down of ballast, sleepers, and rails; the making of engines, tenders, carriages, and wagons; which processes, acting on numerous trades, increase the importation of timber, the quarrying of stone, the manufacture of iron, the mining of coal, the burning of bricks, institute a variety of special manufactures weekly advertised in the *Railway Times*, and call into being some new classes of workers—drivers, stokers, cleaners, plate-layers, etc. Then come the changes, more numerous and involved still, which railways in action produce on the community at large. The organisation of every business is more or less modified: ease of communication makes it better to do directly what was before done by proxy; agencies are established where previously they would not have paid; goods are obtained from remote wholesale houses, instead of near retail ones; and commodities are used which distance once rendered inaccessible.....At the same time, the practice of travelling is immensely extended. Classes who before could not afford

it, take annual trips to the sea, visit their distant relations, make tours, and so are benefitted in body, feelings, and intellect. The more prompt transmission of letters and of news produces further changes—makes the pulse of the nation faster. Yet more, there arises a wide dissemination of cheap literature through railway book-stalls and of advertisements in railway carriages, both of them aiding ulterior progress.” This vast multiplication of specified effects, together with a much vaster multiplication of effects not specified, is traceable step by step, proximately to that mode of force called steam-power, and ultimately to that principle called the persistence of Force.

That the multiplication of Effects, no less than the instability of the Homogeneous, is a direct corollary from the persistence of Force, can easily be seen. “Things which we call different are things which re-act in different ways ; and we can know them as different only by the differences in their re-actions. When we distinguish bodies as hard and soft, rough and smooth, we simply mean that certain like muscular forces expended on them are followed by unlike sets of sensations—unlike re-active forces.” To admit this is to admit that the multiplication of Effects—that variety exhibited on all sides—is the result of the persistence of Force.

Consider, next, the third factor in the process of Evolution—Segregation. Segregation means the gathering of like units into groups, and is constituted by that clustering of similar things into aggregates which goes on simultaneously with the grouping into other aggregates of dissimilar things. By Segregation we get that individuality, or definiteness, which all objects manifest.

It seems scarcely necessary to say that Segregation takes place throughout all phenomena—including the inorganic, the organic, and the super-organic. Take a few instances of inorganic segregation. When-towards the end of September, the trees are gaining their autumn colours, and we are hoping shortly to see a further change increasing still more the beauty of the landscape, we are not uncommonly disappointed by the occurrence of an equinoctial gale. Out of the mixed mass of foliage on each branch the strong current of air carries away the decaying and brightly-tinted leaves, but fails to detach those that are still green. And while these last, frayed and seared by long-continued beatings against each other and the twigs around them, giving a sombre colour to the woods, the red and yellow and orange leaves are collected together in ditches, and behind walls, and in corners where eddies allow them to settle. That is to say, by the action of the uniform force which the wind exerts on both kinds, the dying leaves are picked out from among their still living companions and gathered in places by themselves.

Again, the separation of particles of different sizes, as dust and sand from pebbles, may be similarly effected ; as we see on every road in March.

By magnetism, grains of iron may be selected from among other grains ; as by the Sheffield grinder, whose magnetised gauze mask filters out the steel dust which his wheel gives off, from the stone dust that accompanies it.

Take a handful of any pounded substance, containing fragments of all sizes ; and let it fall to the ground while a gentle breeze is blowing. The large fragments will be collected together on the ground almost immediately under the hand ; somewhat smaller fragments will be carried a little to the leeward ; still smaller ones a little further ; and those minute particles which we call dust will be drifted a long way before they reach the earth."

That the one principle underlying all these processes is the persistence of Force is a truism. In each case we have an aggregate composed of unlike units or of unlike groups of units ; and in each case these unlike groups, of which the aggregate is made up, are under the action of some force influencing them indiscriminately, separated from one another—segregated into smaller aggregates, each consisting of units that are like one another, and unlike those of the smaller aggregates. If Force were not persistent, no such result would obtain.

The fourth factor is Equilibration. This is the goal to which the instability of the Homogeneous, the multiplication of Effects, and Segregation inevitably tend. Equilibration is that universal balancing of active and re-active forces which necessitates the rhythm of Motion and the harmony of Nature.

Equilibration is the limit beyond which Evolution cannot proceed. It is clear that, whether we examine Evolution as exhibited in its concrete processes, or consider it as an abstract question, the redistribution of matter which we observe around us must be arrested by the dissipation of the motions affecting them.

"The rolling stone parts with portions of its momentum to the things it strikes, and finally comes to rest ; as do also, in like manner, the various things it has struck. Descending from the clouds and trickling over the Earth's surface till it gathers into brooks and rivers, water, still running towards a lower level, is at last arrested by the resistance of other water that has reached the lowest level. In the lake or sea thus formed every agitation raised by a wind or the immersion of a solid body, propagates itself around in waves that diminish as they widen, and gradually become lost to observation in motion communicated to the atmosphere and the matter on the shores. The impulse given by a player to the harp-string is transformed by its vibrations into aerial pulses ; and these, spreading on all sides, and weakening as they spread, soon cease to be perceptible ; and finally

die away in generating thermal undulations that radiate in space." In each of these instances we see a balancing of antagonistic forces which at last results in a state of rest, or equilibrium. These different motions, like all motions, are resisted by opposing forces, and are therefore continually suffering from deductions, and these unceasing losses end in the cessation of motion.

The movements instanced above illustrate this truth under its simplest aspect. A complex aspect is that known as *moving equilibrium*. Let us take the instance furnished by a spinning top—not a very imposing example, but a very familiar one. "When the string which has been wrapped round a top's axis is violently drawn off, and the top falls on to the table, it usually happens that, besides the rapid rotation, two other movements are given to it. A slight horizontal momentum, unavoidably impressed on it when leaving the handle, carries it away bodily from the place on which it drops; and, in consequence of its axis being more or less inclined, it falls into a certain oscillation, described by the expressive though inelegant word, 'wabbling.' These two subordinate motions, variable in their proportions to each other and to the chief motion, are commonly soon brought to a close by separate processes of equilibration. The momentum which carries the top bodily along the table, resisted somewhat by the air, but mainly by the irregularities of the surface, shortly disappears; and the top thereafter continues to spin on one spot. Meanwhile, in consequence of that opposition which the axial momentum of a rotating body makes to any change in the plane of rotation (so beautifully exhibited by the gyroscope), 'wabbling' diminishes, and, like the other, is quickly ended. These minor motions having been dissipated, the rotary motion, interfered with only by atmospheric resistance and the friction of the pivot, continues some time with such uniformity that the top appears stationary: there being established a condition which the French mathematicians have termed *equilibrium mobile*" (*moving equilibrium*).

That the universally-co-existent forces of attraction and repulsion in which all phenomena—those of physique, of intellect, and of emotion included—find their ultimate explanation can be traced to the persistence of Force is a necessary inference. "From the persistence of Force follow, not only the various direct and indirect equilibrations going on around, together with that cosmical equilibration which brings Evolution under all its forms to a close; but also those less manifest equilibrations shown in the re-adjustments of moving equilibria that have been disturbed. By this ultimate principle is provable the tendency of every organism, disordered by some unusual influence, to return to a balanced state. To it also may be traced the capacity,

possessed in a slight degree by individuals, and in a greater degree by species, of becoming adapted to new circumstances. And not less does it afford a basis for the inference, that there is a gradual advance towards harmony between man's mental nature and the conditions of his existence. After finding that from it are deducible the various characteristics of Evolution, we finally draw from it a warrant for the belief, that Evolution can end only in the establishment of the greatest perfection and the most complete happiness."

Next month, in the final article on "First Principles," we shall show the bearings of these results upon the central doctrine of Agnosticism.

IGNOTUS.

AGNOSTICISM AND MATERIALISM.

IN the October number of THE AGNOSTIC Dr. Knighton expresses an opinion that Agnosticism is nearly identical with the Materialism of Epicurus. The aim of the present brief paper will be to prove that Agnosticism repudiates any knowledge of Materialism as a body of doctrine. Some Agnostics are Materialists ; some protest that Materialism is the most unsatisfactory explanation of the universe ever devised. But our business is with Agnosticism, not with Agnostics.

The object of every cognition—of every act of knowledge—contains two elements—a universal, necessary, unchangeable element, and a particular, contingent, changeable element. These two elements are found in every possible cognition. The universal, necessary, unchangeable element in every cognition is the ego, self, or I. No cognition is possible with this element alone, for it is always the same in every cognition. Even if it were possible, all cognitions would be alike, and could not be distinguished. They would, indeed, be *one* cognition. The particular, contingent, changeable element may be material, as house, tree, book, etc. ; or non-material, as thought, feeling, volition, space, time, etc. These non-material elements *may* or *may not* be the product of a material organisation ; though I do not assent to the flippant remark of Cabanis, that “the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile.”

The ego cannot know itself, *per se*, any more than the eye can see itself, the ear hear itself, or the tactile extremities feel themselves. Something external must be presented to the eye, ear, or fingers, even though it be nothing more than an irritated nerve, before one sensation can be distinguished from another—or, indeed, sensation can be possible at all. So with the ego, self, or I. Being itself permanent and unchangeable, it presents none of the conditions on which cognition depends. Change or difference is indispensable to the most simple act of knowing, and the change or difference is furnished by its combination in every cognition with the changeable element, which may be either material or non-material.

The ego, self, or I, cannot know itself to be material. For the ego is the permanent, necessary, and unchangeable element in all cognitions. The material element is found in some, and not in others. But if we

admit that the ego is material, we have to face the following absurd and contradictory propositions :—

The material element is found in some cognitions, but not in others.

The material element is found in all cognitions.

And the law of contradiction is brought out in full force. Therefore, we say the ego *cannot be known* to be material.

Let it be observed here, we do not say the ego *is* not material. What *is* or *is not* is for ontology to decide if it can ; we only say that the ego cannot be *known* to be material, which is all that Agnosticism is concerned with. The ego may, for aught we know, consist of motion, or ether, or rock crystal. All that Agnosticism has to say about it is, we cannot know it to be such.

The teachings of psychology are, I believe, tolerably uniform as far as this elementary stage. The phraseology adopted is that of Professor Ferrier, as it is more incisive and explicit than that of most others.

R. BITHELL

(Author of "*The Creed of a Modern Agnostic*").

THE TRUTHSEEKER.

PART II.

By his warm fireside, when the evening lamps
Crowned the day's occupations with repose,
He sat, in bloom of manhood's middle age
And glow of life's contentment. His frank face
Was as a lake, reflecting sun and shade,
When sun is not a glare, nor shade a gloom—
The outward semblance of an inward peace.
Around him hung fair pictures, interspersed
With chiseled marbles, bronzes, tapestries,
And shelves of volumes, bound to be perused,
Rich in old lettered and in modern lore,
Art, romance, history, and theology—
Chiefly the latter. With his mind imbued
From early manhood with a keen desire
To strip the veil from, what his youth denied,
The mysteries of religion, they had been
At first a curious study, then a theme
Whose self-absorbing interest filled his years
With close investigation. Up to then
His life had been a clear and crystal cup
Half-filled with fountain water, ere the tint
Of wine of love or speculative doubt
Had warmed or clouded the transparent flood.
Unlike the lives of most men, who are taught,
Ere they can reason, that religion lies
In what their parents and their pastors learned,
He brought unto his work a cultured mind
Warmed with a love for all men, searching all
That all men worshipped, or professed, or taught.
From books he rose to action, and went forth
Among the people, listening to their speech,
And from their outward learned their inward lives,
Their formulas of faith, and their ideas
Of God and revelation, heaven and hell ;
Thence, into lands remote, in pilgrim garb,
Armed with the staff of virtue, that dear gift
Bequeathed by him whose memory crowned his days,
He pushed his way, pursuant to the end.

From where fair Grecian temples in decay
 Attest a worn-out worship, to the shrines
 Where Buddha's millions crowd in ecstasy ;
 From where great Brahma's priests illumine the pile
 Of human sacrifice, and Parsee hordes
 In adoration greet the godlike sun ;
 From where the mosques of Mohammed proclaim,
 Hour after hour, the unity of God ;
 And reverend Hebrews keep the Pentecost,
 He moved a welcome guest. So high he stood
 In stature of attainments and good deeds,
 Respecting every worship, but withal
 Reserving judgment and withholding speech,
 That tongues prepared to censure turned to praise.
 Thence, from the languid Orient to the West,
 He sought again the air of Christian lands,
 The purer from the contrast, yet impure
 With dust of disputation, bitterness,
 Intolerance in opinion, jealousies,
 Hemming religion in with pomp of pride
 And fettering speech, until expedient men
 Cloak their convictions with hypocrisy.
 With mitred bishops and the priests of Rome,
 He walked amid the incense, and observed
 The worshippers of Mary, and the saints,
 With genial forbearance ; noting how
 Machinery in worship wins the crowd—
 Deceiving ignorance "that good may come."
 From Papist lands to Protestant he moved,
 And talked with white-lawned prelates of the Church—
 The stately Church of England ; worthy men,
 Guarding the tenets of their Triune God.
 To these he listened, still reserving speech
 Where speech might lead to useless argument,
 Yet warm in admiration of the power
 Which clung to usages for virtue's sake.
 And with Reformers too, he held converse ;
 And with Dissenters, varying in dissent,
 As vary men's opinions, when the light
 Of truth, compelling science, startles faith.

Thus, ripened by experience, he shook
 The dust of travel from his wearied feet,
 And, casting off his garb of pilgrimage,
 Near to the life of cities made his home,
 That in them he might tread the dark retreats
 Of human misery, and meet its wants
 With close investigation. And he sought
 The love of woman ; not to deck his house

And serve his selfishness, but to serve her,
 And each the other ; sharing every joy ;
 Dividing every sorrow ; while her rights
 Should be the rights of woman, womanly,
 Not soiling heart and hands with grosser things,
 But sweetening all existence. So he lived ;
 With beauty in his home, peace in his heart,
 And sound of children's voices in his ear.
 Friends gathered round him, rich and poor alike ;
 The rich, the richer for his intercourse ;
 The poor, less poor by his beneficence.
 Oft at his table priests and preachers sat,
 For love of him ; the wiser for his speech ;
 But these—themselves opposed by diverse creeds—
 Lamented what they termed his "unbelief ;"
 The more that so infrequently he stood
 Within their churches with the worshippers.
 For when he went 'twas when the creed was o'er,
 And only then to hearken unto such
 As gave his moral yearnings no offence
 By platitudes of doctrine and belief.
 He held that pulpits never should be thrones
 Of special dynasties proclaimed divine,
 Where prayers and preachings serve but to denounce
 As false the faiths which differ from their own.
 He blessed all temples, churches, synagogues,
 Wherein are taught man's duty unto man—
 The universal law of human love.
 But not for him the virtue that is bribed
 By promises of bliss in worlds to come,
 Or spurred with horrors of a future hell.
 Virtue should virtue be for virtue's sake ;
 Not bought, nor bartered, for a recompense.
 Therefore, he would not stand, as many do,
 Amidst the congregation, and declare,
 E'en "for example's sake," or "policy,"
 That in some mystic dogma he believed,
 Concealing in his heart his disbelief :
 Such he accounted rank hypocrisy—
 The sin of sins, because a shameless sin.

He sought not disputations, nor had wish
 To turn the current of the general mind
 To suit his own convictions. The "fair page"
 Of his young manhood was unwrit upon,
 When he went forth to search with eager eyes
 The books and faiths and lives of holy men
 For his own guidance ; nor did he record
 The sum of his experience, till the grain,

With watchful hand, was sifted from the chaff,
 Filling his heart with satisfied results.
 Life was, to him, a garden, whose high walls
 Enclosed a wide domain and generous soil,
 Inviting labour, and ennobling toil
 With growth of fruit, and flower, and verdant mead,
 For sustenance, and beauty, and repose.
 The walls that hid it from the vast unknown
 Were never meant for climbing ; they who climbed
 Oft fell, and no man reached the top.
 Had it been otherwise, no walls would rear
 A barrier inaccessible to man ;
 And Infinite Wisdom would have oped the way
 To knowledge infinite. Thus reasoned he.

Oft came to him the doubters with their doubts—
 Not only they who stood without the pale,
 But they who stood within it, and professed
 Doctrines their inner consciences denied :
 These sought his counsel, and not these alone,
 But some who, on the very altar's steps,
 Read to the people liturgies and creeds—
 Service to which their hearts responded not.
 To such he said : " Good friend, 'tis not thy fault,
 But fault of custom, that our youths are led
 Through paths obscure, ere reason lights the way,
 Lest reason should endanger usages.
 Thus, in religion, men become machines,
 Like dumb, unlettered soldiers, who obey,
 Nor know nor ask the cause for which they fight,
 Nor why for others' quarrels they must die.
 In thy case, when discovery at last
 Shows, through misguidance, that the way is lost,
 The task of finding it becomes complex,
 Because no observation led thee on.
 If thou hast honest doubts, conceal them not ;
 For doubt is better than dishonesty.
 I cannot wiser counsel give to thee
 Than the immortal Shakespeare gives to all "—
 Then, taking down the volume, read the lines :
 " This above all—to thine own self be true ;
 And it must follow, as the night the day,
 Thou canst not then be false to any man."

To those who asked his more extended views
 On truth in things religious, thus he spoke :
 " My views I give thee freely ; but no one
 Can justly teach belief in things unknown.
 Therein are all men equal ; for we all

Are but as children, groping in the dark,
 To whom, in spite of all that hath been writ,
 No human soul hath ever yet received
 Illumination, save from Nature's book.
 The limit of instruction, then, is this—
 To unteach fallacies in ancient faiths,
 And lift, through culture and intelligence,
 The unreflecting to self-consciousness.
 The germ of all religions may be traced
 To human ignorance, when untaught thought,
 Unable to perceive the cause of things,
 Turned, in its suppliant feebleness, to what
 Addressed the senses merely. Hence, through fear,
 Primeval man, the savage, fell to earth
 In trembling reverence at the thunder's roar,
 Hearing the voices of One to be "appeased"
 By self-abasement and obsequious forms.
 So bowed the Pagan to his numerous gods,
 Whose sensuous worship was the stepping-stone
 To Christian superstitions, when the rule
 Of men, themselves benighted, sought the aid
 Of supernatural agencies to enforce
 Subjection upon ignorant hordes of men.
 As rolls the sphere of time, enlightenment,
 In later ages, like the ascending sun,
 Slowly disperses from religious thought
 The mist of centuries; and, as the mind
 Throws off its sluggishness, perception dawns,
 And reason rises to assume its sway.
 No longer in our happier Christian lands
 Are faiths compelled by oligarchic laws;
 But none the less doth discipline enforce
 The thralldom of conventional beliefs,
 Clogging the intellectual lives of men.
 'Tis thus the character ascribed to God,
 In Christian as in anti-Christian lands,
 Though differing in kind, bears on its face
 The mystic self-delusions whence it sprung;
 And while the teachers make the acts supreme,
 All inconsistent with his attributes,
 Faiths will be forms and dogmas will be doubts.
 If God exists, he must be All in All—
 All wisdom, justice, knowledge, power, and love,
 Knowing, before he chooses to create,
 All consequence. He who divinely breathes
 Into the lungs of infancy its life
 Foreknows each step of man's development—
 Each thought, relation, action, and result
 Of that, his masterpiece, the human mind.

With such forefending knowledge, then, whence comes
 His "promised" glory to "obedient" man,
 His "threatened" punishment for evil deeds—
 As if results are but experiments,
 And human lives a problem to be solved
 To satisfy a wisdom incomplete?
 The preacher answers: "This is mystery.
 Man is endowed with independent will,
 And God decrees accountability
 Of human action to himself, the judge.
 Lift not thy finite reason, mortal man,
 Against the record of the law divine."
 But is this logic? Is not God demeaned
 By the assumption that, foreknowing all,
 He holds the creatures of his sovereign will
 Amenable for that which he foresees,
 Suffers to be, and seeks not to avert?
 Ah, well might they, the blinded seers of old,
 Who crowned absurdity with "law divine,"
 Cover their work with veil of "mystery."
 Mystery exists in Nature's widest realm—
 From growth of feeblest germ to man himself;
 But he, the greatest mystery of all,
 Cannot in justice, human or divine,
 Receive command to fix his faith in that
 Which reason fails to see or justify.
 If God there be, he is a God of love,
 Whose crowning gift of love to needful man
 Is that intelligence which makes him man,
 The lamp of guidance and the wand of power.
 When, therefore, faith and logic are at odds,
 Neither is by the other justified.
 If God is God omnipotent, whose will
 Can shape and guide the world of human thought,
 Wherein consists omnipotence whose will
 Is outraged by his own created things?
 And yet we hear the moralist declare
 That God "desireth" virtue, and is "grieved"
 Or "joyful" as his creatures bear themselves.
 But if supreme intelligence and power
 Depends for its condition on the act
 Of its own subject, then the law's reversed,
 And God becomes the suppliant of man.
 Can stretch of folly further go?
 When such and other inconsistencies
 Baffle philosophy, the teachers turn
 To Bible language, shifting upon texts
 Reason's responsibility: "Judge not,
 Lest ye be judged; but take the Book divine

And learn therein not man's but God's decrees."
I would with all respect and deference speak
Of that revered old volume, which still holds
Wondrous dominion over hosts of men,
Who seek therein their comfort and their hope.
Much have I studied it, for its own sake,
And for my own advantage, and have found
Much to approve, if somewhat to condemn.
But preachers should be honest, and declare
The doubtful authenticity of tracts
Collected through vast centuries of time,
And which, though often powerful in thought,
Sublime with precepts of philosophy,
Curious with legends and with fabled lore—
Where skilled imagination serves for fact—
As "God inspired" put forth no sounder claims
Than do the "holy books" of elder faiths,
Each claimed "divine" by countless witnesses.

EDGAR RICHTON.

(To be concluded next month.)

THE POPULAR RELIGIOUS FAITH.

THE DOCTRINE OF DESIGN—(*Continued*).

THE old argument of design, illustrated by the watch, or the adaptation of certain arrangements to produce given effects, having grown out of credit, a new phase of the idea has been recently started, called the "argument of proportion." Thus, recurring to the watch, and leaving on one side the transparent glass, the face marked with figures, the hard metallic wheels, the pins of precious stones, and other such considerations, the new advocates direct attention to the number of notches on the several wheels, and tell us that these teeth or cogs are either sixty, or decimal submultiples of sixty, for the minute and second hands, and duodecimals for the hour-hand. This exact numerical system, we are told, is proof positive of foreseeing and constructive intelligence.

By a similar process of argument we are reminded that the law of gravitation shows a curious anomaly, which marks design. Its action is in *direct* proportion to the masses, but in *inverse* proportion to the squares of the distances. Thus a mass of two tons has double the weight of a mass of one ton, in the same plain; but, assuming the radius of the earth to be 4,000 miles, a mass which weighs one ton on the earth's surface would, at an elevation of 4,000 miles, weigh, not half, but only a quarter of a ton, and at 8,000 miles elevation only a ninth part of a ton—the square of three radiuses. The person who discovered this law, no doubt, is worthy of all credit for his acute observation and mathematical knowledge; but tell me this: Would it not have shown design equally well if the law had been reversed, or if gravitation had acted uniformly in both cases? Why does a different ratio show more wisdom of design than if the same ratio had been preserved?

In the watch the argument is enforced because all the wheels act directly; but in gravitation the ground is shifted, and the proof of wisdom is not uniformity of action, but diversity. No one denies that the laws of nature are invariable. No one denies that it is a great triumph of intellect to formulate those laws; but, because you or I have discovered the *modus operandi*, it does not prove that creative wisdom calculated from the beginning the precise effects which men have

observed to take place under present circumstances. It only proves this, that the same uniform effect will result from the same conditions, and that man has been wise enough to discover the law of action, and to formulate that law with mathematical precision. Take a very simple illustration. In the reign of François I. of France, Giles and Jean Gobelin took to Paris the secret of dyeing a very brilliant scarlet, still called the *Gobelin Scarlet*. The secret had been procured from Kuffelar, a dyer of Leyden. Kuffelar informed the brothers Gobelin that the presence of tin was the secret agent which converted the red of cochineal into scarlet. This, on the surface, looks as if the Leyden dyer had sufficient chemical knowledge to know the action of tin on aqua regia and cochineal; but what is the fact? Simply this: One day Kuffelar happened to set a bottle containing aqua regia and cochineal on a window-seat lined with tin. The bottle was accidentally thrown down, and its contents spilt on the tin lining. When the dyer went to the window he observed his red converted into an exquisite scarlet. There was no forethought, no calculation, no chemical knowledge, no design in the matter—it was simply and solely an accident, a lucky chance of circumstances, which produced this beautiful dye; and the only merit was that of observing the effect, and putting two and two together to account for it.* A chemist would search out how the acids of aqua regia act upon tin, and how this acid compound of tin acts on the red cochineal. He would seek to know minutely the exact proportions of acid and tin necessary; and, after long, laborious study and several experiments, he would solve the secret, and show how the required results may be obtained with absolute certainty. There is much wisdom and knowledge required in discovering the “law” of action in this simple instance; but, if we hence inferred that the Leyden dyer had known all this, and had carried out all this previous knowledge in making his Gobelin scarlet, we should most grossly err. Kuffelar was merely a practical dyer, who had learnt his trade of dying red in the ordinary way, and probably would have died as he began had not an accident taught him a new lesson. There was no design in the matter, no chemical knowledge, no wise calculation; and the only merit was *post factum*—the merit of observing the effect produced. That one mass of matter should attract another mass of matter is no more marvellous than the contrary would have been—viz., that masses

* A similar tale is told of another dye. A girl at an inn wanted to dye some ribbons, and asked her sweetheart, who worked at a madder factory, for a little dye. She received the madder in an old pewter pot, and, steeping her ribbons in the liquid, she set the pot on a fire to boil. When the young man saw the result he was amazed, and, being sharp-witted, he readily attributed the brilliancy of the dye to the palpable cause.

of matter have no attraction at all. That the attraction should be in *direct* proportion to the bulk is no more surprising than if it acted inversely, or in any other way. Mass acts on mass somehow, and man, by his wisdom, has discovered *post factum* the law of that action, and has been enabled to formulate that law—and there the matter ends.

It is not for one moment disputed that all the laws of nature are adapted to certain ends ; all that is contended for is this, that these causes and effects do not of necessity indicate foresight of design. They may be gradual developments arising we know not how, as scarlet is the development of red, the result of accident ; like the discovery of glass, and even of the telescope—two inventions which seem the result of extraordinary wisdom, but which were, in reality, due wholly to blind chance or hap-hazard. The inventions were entirely without merit ; but the *post factum* thought and knowledge brought to bear on the subject show marvellous acuteness in the observers. This is the blunder to be guarded against : acuteness of observation is one thing, wisdom of design is quite another. Because an observer sees that certain combinations produce certain effects, it does not follow that those combinations were the result of design. It only proves the acuteness of observers in tracing the secret action of those combinations, and in showing by what uniform law the given effects are produced.

Take another example of the same sort, flourished by modern theologians as incontestible evidence of design : I mean the laws of the planetary movements. Kepler discovered the laws of the motions of the planets : they move in ellipses, and not in circles, and their motions are not uniform, but faster when nearer the sun, and slower when more remote. Kepler discovered that the law was this : The squares of the periodic times vary as the cubes of the distance. This discovery, no doubt, showed marvellous acuteness in the Wurtemberg astronomer ; but it is no more a proof of wisdom that the planets should move in ellipses at varying rates of speed than if they had moved in circles at a uniform rate. If they move, they must move in some way, and Kepler discovered the law of these motions.

There was a time when those motions must have been different. If "creation" was a gradual process, the planetary movements, when the system was imperfect, must have been different to what they now are. Suppose our earth the only planet of our system, and that the sun and moon were subsequently created, its motion could not possibly be the same as it is now ; but it would have required every bit as much acuteness to formulate its law of motion at "that beginning" as it did when Kepler lived.

Whether the wisdom which ruled chaos and its formless discord was equal to the wisdom which rules the perfect system is no concern of

ours. Immaculate and infinite wisdom cannot be other than immaculate and infinite, and, therefore, the wisdom which presided over the "formless void" was as great as the wisdom which maintains "creation" in its present state. The wisdom of no design was equal to the wisdom of design. If, however, "creation" was gradual, then it is quite certain that the Creator did not from the beginning exhibit that wisdom of design which Kepler's laws credit him with. The motions referred to by Kepler could only belong to the present developed system. It is cochineal red made scarlet by the presence of tin, and not an original operation at all.

Every one has read Charles Lamb's "roast pig." Lamb says that savages used at one time to eat their pigs raw ; but one day a fire broke out in the piggeries of a certain tribe, and roasted the pigs alive. The fragrance of the roasting pigs was most appetising, and the taste was so superior to the raw flesh that ever afterwards the savages ate cooked food. This is only a tale ; but there is nothing improbable about it. Supposing it to be true, the art of cookery might be cited as a proof of wisdom and design. Some Newtonian savage, we might be told, discovered by forethought and his knowledge of the human system the reason why cooked food is more fitted than raw food to become bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, and, therefore, the savages who introduced the custom of cooking their pigs were wiser than their fellows ; but this was by no means the case. The Newtonian savage would have been wise who might discover the laws of assimilation and the chemistry of food, I allow ; but the art of cookery was due to an accidental fire, and not to design. The acuteness of the savage who discovered the reason why cooked food was the better is readily admitted ; but there was no wisdom of design, no previous knowledge of the action of cooked food, no forethought, no nice calculation employed ; the happy result was simply due to blind chance ; it was an accident, and the furthest possible from a design.

Returning to the law of gravitation. There must be somewhere between the earth and the moon a dead-lock region, where muscular action is physically impossible, and what we call weight loses its ponderosity. Jules Verne, in one of his clever tales, avails himself of this fact to show, if the cocks and hens in the balloon had their wings spread, they could not fold them ; if on their perch, they could not hop down ; and if off their perch, they could not fly on it. When his voyager lifted up his arm, he could not lower it ; and when he attempted to walk, he could not set one foot before the other. The sandbag despatched remained motionless, suspended on nothing. It was in that debateable region when the attraction of the moon exactly balanced the diminished attraction of the earth, and, like Buridan's ass between two haystacks,

the impulse was so evenly adjusted that the ass died because his will was equally attracted to both stacks.

To us, perhaps, this dead-lock region is no inconvenience, because we never voyage to the moon ; but I wholly fail to see any mark of special wisdom in such an arrangement, and it must be monstrously inconvenient to angels and powers of the air passing to and fro between heaven and earth. Think of Elijah's chariot and horses. I wonder how in the world they got over this belt. The horses must have been paralysed, and powerless to move ; and, if Elijah had waited till he reached this neutral region before he threw off his mantle, it would never have fallen into the hands of Elisha, but would have floated like a meteor between the earth and the moon. This would have been a triumphant proof indeed of Elijah's translation ; and the Christian Evidence Society would be able to point to Elijah's cloak in the cloud as an incontestible proof of the miracle recorded of him. Perhaps we might not be able to see it with unaided sight ; but our telescopes would be sure to find it out, and every clergyman would keep an instrument for the general use of his parishioners.

We have one or two other cases—Enoch, for example, and Jesus : both ascended through the air in the body. Then have we angels innumerable—guardian angels, messenger angels, angels of plague, angels of death, fallen angels, angels who fell in love with the daughters of men, lying angels sent from heaven to deceive Ahab, and many more. They moved, they wrestled with men, they ate and drank with Abraham, they took hold of the hands of Lot's daughters and hurried them to Zoah, they climbed ladders, and must have passed this dead-lock region times out of mind. I much fear they would not think it a proof of wisdom. For my own part, I cannot make out how they ever passed the line at all. It must be infinitely worse than old Bunyan's Slough of Despond. It is a pity that none of the inspired writers tell us a word about this neutral belt, and how it is passed ; nor do I remember reading in the ponderous folios of the Bollandists any explanation how the saints in light contrive to pass and re-pass this boundary, often laden with souls and bodies of the dead, and sometimes with whole covies, prayed or bought out of purgatory. We want a new Kepler to solve this mystery ; but, in the meantime, it appears to me, it would be a mark of wisdom to suspend the laws discovered by Kepler and the system of gravitation discovered by Newton, if the intercommunication between heaven and earth is to continue, especially at the general resurrection.

Grant that the locality of heaven is not known, we all suppose it must be somewhere beyond the moon ; and this interfering gravitation cannot fail to interfere with the ascension of the body. We are told

that the arrest of the law of contraction from cold as water approaches the mysterious 32 deg. of Fahrenheit is a triumphant proof of the wisdom of design. Well, it may be so ; but why did not this wisdom of design arrest the law of gravitation at that critical point where the moon and earth exercise the tug of war, and create a dead lock which cannot be passed over? Query.—Is this the “gulf,” I wonder, referred to in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, which could not be passed over. It certainly was often crossed.

JULIAN.

(*To be continued.*)

RELIGION AND WAR.

FOURTH PAPER.

COMING rapidly down to our own times, how does the religion of Mohammed stand related to war to-day? We recently read in our newspapers that, in view of the imminent probability of war between England and Russia, “many Indian Mohammedan princes have proffered their assistance to the Viceroy in repelling the aggression on Afghanistan, as they consider it a duty to protect their co-religionists against the encroachments of the implacable enemy of the Caliph and the people under his rule.” As far as our Mussulman fellow-subjects are concerned, war between us and Russia would be a “holy war”—a war on behalf of religion. So also has been the Soudanese war on the part of our fanatical opponents, the so-called Mahdi and his followers. As to the mission of Gordon, and the continuance of our troops in the Soudan after his death, whenever any one was so irreverent as to ask our most Christian Premier, “*Que diable veut-il faire dans cette galère?*” he was not able to furnish any better excuse than this, that, bearing in mind the nature of Moslem fanaticism, we could not afford to ignore the Mahdi, seeing that we must keep him out of Egypt Proper, and seeing also that we ourselves are, in India, a great Mohammedan Power.

Islamism has not always presented one unbroken front. Time would fail me to describe the many sects into which it has been, and

still is, divided—the Druses of Syria, and the Assassins, whose very name has become a synonym for treacherous murderers; the fanatical Wahabees, one of whom stabbed Lord Mayo; the four orthodox sects, and the numerous monastic orders. Of all these, some are better, some worse, than the original religion.

But something may be cited to the credit of Islam before I leave it. “The passive resistance of the Hindus proved too strong for Mohammedan fanaticism; and, when the first fury of the invasion was over, a tacit toleration was conceded to the Brahmins, which virtually amounted to full religious liberty. Mutual tolerance was exercised, and a religious harmony, highly honourable to both parties, subsisted. That two such religions should have existed together for six centuries without producing civil commotion is a fact not paralleled in the history of the world. It is not surprising that, under such circumstances, the exclusive bigotry taught by the Koran gradually failed, until the duty of propagating religion by the sword became one of those phrases which men repeat without attaching meaning to their words.” So that the Emperor Akbar and other reformers really reverted to the earlier creed of Mohammed, which he taught while still at Mecca, which is found in the best parts of the Koran, and which is embodied in the first three and the last three invocations of the Mussulman rosary:—“O Compassionate! O Merciful! O King!.....O Patient! O Mild! O God!” Even the fierce Saracens eventually became at least as humane as their Christian enemies, the Crusaders—I think still more so; and even the much-despised and certainly degenerate Turk can scarcely be accused of religious intolerance.

I come now to notice, lastly, the connection between the Christian religion and war.

I have purposely departed from the chronological order in which these three great religions were developed, and have reserved the consideration of Christianity until now, partly on the principle of keeping “the good wine until now,” because I believe Christianity to be the most enlightened religion of the three. There was also another reason—viz., that Judaism and Islam are not only both of Semitic origin, but are distinctly Monotheistic in their creeds; whereas Christianity, though likewise of Semitic origin, has become immensely modified by Aryan influences, and is decidedly Polytheistic. The Jehovah of Judaism and the Allah of Islam are each believed to conduct the business of the universe on his own account and unaided. The Christian’s God, when it is not “Jesus only,” is Jehovah and Co., however strenuously this may be denied by hair-splitting theologians. There may be unity, because there is *one* firm; but there are three partners, and so there is plurality, and, as each is God, there is Polytheism. My chief

objection to the doctrine of the Trinity is the intellectual confusion or dishonesty which it must induce. I have no such objection to urge against a frank Polytheism ; and it appears to me that, in estimating the value of a Theistic conception, it is *quality*, and not numerical *quantity*, that should be the chief element in our standard of judgment. Now, it is admitted by Christian apologists that Christianity has caused more wars than it has prevented. So far, it is no better than Judaism or Islam ; nay, it is much worse, if I am correct in saying that the wars of Christianity are the sins of a purer religion, and, therefore, sins against more light and more knowledge. For there is this remarkable difference that, whereas Moses and Mohammed, the founders of the other two religions, expressly incited religious wars during their own lives, and enjoined on their religious posterity the continuance of such wars as a pious duty—Jesus, the first founder of Christianity, proclaimed a gospel of peace. If the records of his life and teaching have any credibility whatever, they certainly testify to the peaceful character of his mission. “Blessed are the peacemakers ;” “Love your enemies ;” “Resist not evil.” Not that he was so short-sighted or so excessively sanguine as to imagine that wars would cease immediately, or even soon, for he said also : “It must needs be that offences come ; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh.” He is said to have foreseen the fearful struggle ending in the destruction of Jerusalem. He seems to have perceived that his own teaching would be so imperfectly understood and obeyed that even his pure religion, by reason of the loftiness of the ideal, would itself be productive of war. “Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth : I am not come to send peace, but a sword.” But that these words referred to a temporary effect, and not to the spirit and purpose of his teaching, is clear, from the very fact that they are altogether exceptional, as well as from his defence before Pilate. “My kingdom is not of this world, else would my servants fight.” He had refused to be rescued by his ardent follower at the expense of bloodshed. “Put up thy sword into its sheath, for they that take the sword must perish with the sword.” “He saved others ; himself he cannot save,” is the key-note of his sublime career. May it not be that this is the real secret of his power, and of his hold over the hearts of men ? Others have conquered by aggression and by killing ; Jesus conquers by submission and by dying.

J. ASHFORD JENKINSON.

(*To be concluded.*)

REVIEWS.

HERBERT SPENCER'S SOCIOLOGY : A RECENT ADDITION.

WE have received from the author of "The Principles of Sociology" a very welcome addition to the first volume in the shape of an appendix. The object of this bulky addendum is to place before the public further evidence supporting the conclusions set forth in vol. i. of the "Principles," and a number of copies have been printed for private circulation and sent to the chief among those who are likely to be interested either in the general question discussed or in some of the special questions associated with it.

This *brochure* gives many very striking examples of primitive thought, among them being vivid illustrations of the confusion of dreams with realities. Here is an instance :—

"Occasionally we hear it remarked of dreams that their seeming actuality affected the feelings for some time after awaking—an impression like that, say, of escape from real danger continuing after recognition of the fact that the danger was ideal. The tendency of an extremely vivid dream thus to generate an emotion such as accompanies reality is one factor in producing belief in its reality. I have lately met with striking proofs of this. In a company of less than a dozen persons three testified to having, in childhood, had such vivid dreams of flying down stairs, and being impressed so strongly with the experiences as real, that they actually tried to fly down stairs ; and one of them suffered from an injured ankle consequent on the attempt.

"On writing subsequently to the lady in whose family these statements were made, to verify my recollections of them, she gave me a story which one of her daughters had subsequently narrated, showing how literally this daughter had accepted her visions in childhood. Brought up amid much talk about animals, she, on one occasion, dreamed that a gorilla, who lived near at hand, gave her something ; and she added : 'When I walked up the lane I used to wonder where the gorilla lived.'

"Now, if dream-experiences and waking-experiences are thus confounded by the children of the civilised, notwithstanding the discriminations which they have heard made by adults, and notwithstanding the conception that has been given to them of mind as an indwelling entity distinct from body, it is obvious that primitive men, lacking this theory of mind, lacking words in which to express many perceivable distinc-

tions, and lacking, too, instruction from the more cultivated, will inevitably confuse dream thoughts and the thoughts of the waking state. Hence, on reading of savages—as, for instance, the Kamschadales—that the ideas of sleeping and waking life are apt to be confounded by them, we shall see that, so far from being anomalous, a confounding of them to a greater or less extent is, at first, inevitable.

“Especially shall we see no difficulty in recognising the interpretations of primitive conceptions thus yielded when we remember that even still, in some of the educated among ourselves, there survives a belief in the reality of beings seen in dreams, and that, at the present moment, there exists a group of highly-cultivated men having for one of their objects to collect the narratives of supernatural visitations during sleep.”

Towards the end of the appendix is an exceedingly interesting note on the theology of the Accadians. We quote the illustrations *in extenso*.—

“The distinguished Assyriologist, Professor A. H. Sayce, in his article on ‘Babylonia,’ in the new edition of the ‘Encyclopædia Britannica’ (iii. 192, 193,) writes as follows :—

The earliest religion of Accad was a Shamanism, resembling that of the Siberian or Samoyed tribes of to-day. Every object had its spirit, good or bad ; and the power of controlling these spirits was in the hands of priests and sorcerers. The world swarmed with them, especially with the demons ; and there was scarcely an action which did not risk demoniac possession. Diseases were regarded as caused in this way.....In course of time certain spirits (or, rather, deified powers of Nature) were elevated above the rest into the position of gods.....The old Shamanism gradually became transformed into a religion, with a host of subordinate semi-divine beings ; but so strong a hold had it upon the mind that the new gods were still addressed by their spirits. The religion now entered upon a new phase ; the various epithets applied to the same deity were crystallised into fresh divinities ; and the sun-god, under a multitude of forms, became the central object of worship.

“Now, though Professor Sayce espouses the theory of the mythologists concerning the origin of Nature-worship, it seems to me that this description tallies better with the theory I have opposed to it. The earliest stage he indicates is that in which ghosts, originally human, have become identified with, or inhabitants of, surrounding objects, as we saw they everywhere tend to do. Just as, among the Esquimaux and others, Sun and Moon thus come to be residences of particular ghosts, so with the Accadians. As described by Mr. Sayce, this Accadian Nature-worship, instead of being primordial, was developed out of ghost-worship.

“As given by M. Lenormant, in his ‘La Magie chez les Chaldéens,’ the following is part of an incantation against pestilence :—

De la fièvre, esprit du ciel, souviens-t'en ! Esprit de la terre, souviens-t'en !....
Esprits mâles et femelles, seigneurs des étoiles, souvenez-vous en !.....Esprits mâles
et femelles de la montagne sublime, souvenez-vous en ! Esprits mâles et femelles
de la lumière de vie, souvenez-vous en !.....Esprits femelles du père et de la mère
de Moul-ge [the Assyrian god Bell] souvenez-vous en !.....Esprit de la Déesse-
onde, mère de Ea, souviens-t'en ! Esprit de Ninouah, fille de Ea (Nouah), souviens-
t'en !.....Esprit du dieu Feu, pontife suprême sur la surface de la terre, souviens-
t'en ! (p. 128).

"Here, then, the address is uniformly made to ghosts; and these are the ghosts of beings allied by name to traditional human beings—the ghosts of beings who have come to be called gods and goddesses; ghosts regarded as lords and spirits of stars, mountains, fire. And this, too, as we saw above, was the creed of the Iranians. The *fravashis* were the ghosts or spirits possessed alike by men and gods—even by the chief god.

"Moreover, little as the fact is recognised, the Hebrew God is habitually spoken of in a parallel way and with the same implication. 'The Spirit of the Lord' is a consistent expression if, as in the Accadian belief, and in the beliefs of existing Bedouins, the original conception of a god was that of a powerful terrestrial ruler—a ruler such as the one hospitably entertained by Abraham, with whom he covenanted to yield allegiance in return for territory. But the expression, 'Spirit of the Lord,' reasonably applied to the double of a potentate after his death, is nonsense if otherwise applied; since, as every critical reader must have observed, if the Lord was originally conceived as a spirit, then the Spirit of the Lord must have been conceived as the spirit of a spirit. Such an expression as that in Isaiah xlviii. 16, 'The Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me,' which is reconcilable with the primitive idea that every human being, whether king or subject, includes at least two individualities, is irreconcilable with the current theology; for the word spirit, whether interpreted in the sense accepted alike by savage and civilised, or whether referred back to its derivation as meaning breath (which it does in Hebrew, as in various other languages), inevitably connotes a body of which it is the spirit.

"Thus all three of the widely unlike types of men inhabiting these eastern regions—the so-called Turanians, the Aryans, and the Semites—had the same theory of supernatural beings. However otherwise different, deities, like men, were conceived by them as having doubles. The notion is perfectly congruous with the conclusion everywhere else forced upon us—that deities are the expanded ghosts of dead men—and is utterly incongruous with any other theory."

This addition to the Synthetic Philosophy forms so coherent a body of evidence that, even if it stood alone, it would do much to establish the general doctrines taught in the first volume of "The Principles of Sociology."

ARTHUR SPALDING.

"THE FAITH OF JESUS NOT A NEW FAITH" (*Williams & Norgate*).

The author of "The Faith of Jesus Not a New Faith" has chosen a subject replete with interest, and for the elucidation of which there already exists a mass of facts. Invention appears to have played but a small part in the formation of the Christian myth and system, and it is surprising how little of originality they contain. The supernatural events in the life of its founder bear striking resemblances to similar features in the legends of other religions and mythologies, while its rites

and ceremonies, as well as its principal festivals, are but adapted survivals of Paganism. It was, therefore, with lively interest, and with the hope that we might be able to recommend it as a useful and trustworthy manual upon the subject, that we took up the little book before us ; but we must frankly avow that we closed it with the regret that the author had not more fully qualified himself for his task, and used greater discrimination in the selection of his authorities and facts. The book, unhappily, in so far as it deals with comparative religion, consists but of ill-digested facts and crude speculations. The writer, indeed, declares that he has only "made use of such documents as are of well-proven genuineness, and has discarded everything which is not acknowledged as thoroughly reliable," and it only remains, therefore, for those who "read these pages to determine whether he has succeeded or not." His views appear to have been largely formed in that school of astronomical mythology which is entirely out of date, and, his knowledge of modern researches in religious archæology being exceedingly limited, some of his most confident assertions of "undisputed" fact are among the most questionable. Thus, when he tells his readers that "a close study of all the great religious systems of the world shows that religions are purer in proportion as we draw nearer their origin," he is asserting what the great majority of students of anthropology and comparative religion would emphatically deny. A more intimate acquaintance with the best authorities would dissipate his notion that sun-worship is the basis of all religions. He declares it to be a well-known and undisputed fact, that the sun is the "basis of the ancient religion of India, Egypt, Phœnicia, Syria, Persia, and a host of others." It is true that sun-worship occupies a prominent position in the Semitic and Egyptian religions ; but in the earlier phases of Aryan religion its influence is not so apparent. Dyaus and Zeus, Varuna and Ouranos, Parjanga and Perkunas, as well as Odin, were certainly not sun-gods. Even Agni was only connected with the sun when he became an abstract divinity. Animal worship is declared to be based upon the misunderstanding of ideographic signs, the author being evidently unaware that animal worship exists where ideographic writing is unknown.

In his attempts at amateur philology the author is equally unhappy. Babel he decides to be made up of Bâ—the same as *Pa* and *abba*—meaning "father," and of Bel, "heaven," thus making Babel "heaven-father." Had he consulted any modern work on Assyriology, he would have found that Babel is the Assyrian Bab-ili, "Gate of God," and is a translation of the Accadian Ca-dimîra, where Ca is "gate" and dimîra "God." Other instances might be quoted, but this is sufficient to stify our criticism.

W. SADLER.

PANONTISTIC FRAGMENTS.

THE UNREVEALED AND UNREVEALABLE.

THE miseries of the world are deeper, sadder a thousandfold, than can be revealed or depicted. Of solitary anguish in its utmost intensity what can poets know? And with certain complicated social evils are they better acquainted? As the apostle saith, the whole creation groaneth. Man's wretchedness is not the only wretchedness. What suffering man can inflict; what suffering he, with wanton cruelty, rejoices in inflicting on the helpless creatures he calls the lower animals, but which are oftener far nobler than he! It is the sad glory of man, however, that, unlike the lower animals, he can, through imagination, intensify all his woes a hundredfold—yea, a millionfold. Under apparent calm, or even under spontaneous playfulness, the heart of many a god-like man, of many a tender woman, may be the scene of ceaseless and countless tragedies. There are persons who talk about the Unknown and the Unknowable with the pretentious air of discoverers, when, in truth, from of old, the Unknown and the Unknowable have been the very foundation, the very substance, of all religion, of all religions. Even in the Hebrew Scriptures the Unknown and the Unknowable are always assumed, frequently proclaimed, in contrast with those attributes of God manifested in heaven and on earth. Behind the thunders of Sinai were the eternal silences; behind the astounding myths the more marvellous mysteries. The saints and the prophets would have turned with scorn from the presumptuous fool, shameless enough to maintain that there was no God, because he could not by searching find him out. To the Unknown and the Unknowable of the universe the unrevealed and the unrevealable of the human heart correspond, or, rather, they are portions of one reality. We are all actors in the same awful drama, and behind the stage is the abyss of Deity, an abyss of immense and inconsolable woe.

POVERTY.

The saying of Menander, that he whom the gods love dies young, has a deep wisdom, a mournful beauty, and needs no comment. Another saying of Menander, that he who lives in poverty is inclined to live wrong, has a terrible significance; it has a far more tragical import than in Menander's own days, when society was simple, and when slavery

hindered the existence of a proletarian class. It does not mean that he who lives in poverty is disposed to injure his neighbour, but that he is impelled to be unjust to himself, to be disloyal to his nobler nature, that he has no healthy relations with the universe, has a life half of horrible squalors, half of ghastly dreams.

THE MOON.

At first men reckoned by months, and not by years. As the influences of the moon are all malign, and as to be moonstruck is to be mad, the moon changing ever and ever cold and ghastly, symbolises better man's lot, ever diversified and ever miserable, than the sun, ever grandly marching, ever with beneficent radiance smiling.

THE DESERT.

The mountain is sublime, the sea sublime, the sky sublime; but sublimer than they all is the desert, because, more than they all, it overwhelms us with the awful sense of loneliness in immensity. The sublimity of Hebrew literature is the sublimity of the wilderness. The ocean the Hebrews had never seen: with the Red Sea and the Mediterranean they had not close and constant commune. No mountain near them was sufficiently massive and lofty to kindle the grandest emotions. To the Hebrews the sky had less significance than to the other Oriental nations that worshipped the sun, the moon, and the stars. But the Hebrews received their spiritual education in one of the most awful deserts; and their country, though portions of it were fertile, had the wilderness on every side. What as a potency for the imagination and plenitude for the heart the wilderness was to the Hebrews, the cloudy and tempestuous heaven was to the Scandinavians—infinite and impenetrable gloom. Hence the sublimity of Northern myths. All earth's primordial reformers have to be in the wilderness for a season; and Jesus of Nazareth had to face the torments and temptations of the wilderness ere entering on his divine mission.

LOFTINESS AND BREADTH.

Lofty men should never attempt to gain breadth; the breadth they never gain, and in the fruitless endeavour they lose the loftiness.

WILLIAM MACCALL.

The Agnostic:

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF LIBERAL THOUGHT.

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"Agnosticism simply means that a man shall not say he knows or believes that which he has no scientific grounds for professing to know or believe.....Agnosticism says that we know nothing of what may be beyond phenomena."—PROF. HUXLEY.

"I think that generally (and more and more as I grow older), but not always, an Agnostic would be the more correct description of my state of mind."—CHARLES DARWIN.

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THE AGNOSTIC.

DECEMBER, 1885.

A LESSON FROM "PURE THEISM."

THE most interesting development of religious thought at the present day is, perhaps, the one which seems to make the least progress of any—the cause of Pure Theism. In this country, at least, it has been mainly characterised by unavailing struggle. It is somewhat coldly looked upon by its nearest neighbour, Unitarianism, although that body—even the professedly "Christian" section of it—has largely fraternised with some Theistic teachers hailing from India. Pure Theism has met with such a small measure of what may be called success, as an organised denomination in our midst, that an age uniformly commercial in its judgments is accustomed to deride it as a failure, and to repeat the pet platitude in regard to it—that it will never *do*. Judging from its feeble numerical strength and its abortive congregational enterprises, it is certainly not a prosperous cause.

There must be some explanation of this weakness and failure. At first sight, it would seem as if a purely Theistic position (in the accepted sense of the term)—one avoiding the distinctive hall-mark of Unitarianism, which is anti-Trinitarianism—would be one to which many minds would instinctively resort, after having discovered the weakness of orthodox belief. For, after all, one cannot carry the numerical squabble—its part in which is the hidden strength of Unitarianism—into *everything*. One would think that, having settled the question of the probable truth of the Unity, the disproof of a Trinity, being a negation, not an affirmation, could not be permanently erected into an article of belief, or be anything upon which a reasonable being could continue to subsist intellectually. And, this being granted, no more readily-assumed position can, at first sight, be imagined—certain premises allowed—than just a broad Theistic persuasion, which does not trouble itself with any problems in multiplication, having discerned one First Cause, sufficient

for all things. A recession from the Trinitarian hypothesis disposes, also, of much of the popular religious faith—strips away much of the accretion of superstition. Why is the simple result, of itself—a professed belief, namely, in one God, without a thought bestowed upon the common persuasion that there are three persons in the Godhead—a belief which fails to attract adherents?

As we have said, there is a controversial strength in Unitarianism which attracts many. Its very existence, fronting Trinitarianism as it does, is of the nature of a protest; and a protest, if it have any ground at all, is generally, with the second-class mind, catching and effective. It is another Protestantism, with the added fascination of a Martineau. Yet there are many minds so constituted as to abhor controversy in general, and religious controversy in particular. Why do these not range themselves under the banner of Pure Theism, and form a communion, strong intellectually—powerful because of the mental weight of its adherents, if not formidable numerically? Yet Pure Theism is not strong; not conspicuously strong in any sense. If Unitarianism itself be languishing in England, its congregations diminishing, and its ranks divided—and there is some difference of opinion on this point—there can be very little doubt as to the decay of Pure Theism in our midst.

That "God is not far from every one of us" is a dictum which has commanded some measure of assent. But it would seem as if, in a sense, he were farther removed from the school of thought we have been speaking of than from any other believing in the Deity. The effect, in a sense, of all the *loss* which the individual experiences in quitting Orthodoxy, passing through Unitarianism, and finally arriving at Theism, though it may be a loss of admittedly erroneous and corrupt belief alone, is to render the object of worship or reverence remaining farther removed in every way. Landmarks and directing posts destroyed, the way to the seat of the Eternal seems longer than ever. Although the Theist would probably repudiate the idea that the Deity does not concern himself with human affairs, yet every step of the retreat from orthodoxy has been a direct loss of evidence just in that connection—a distinct weakening of the only proof of divine interference possible; and there has been no addition, to supply this loss, of any evidence for the closeness of the divine relationship.

Is there not something to be said, then, in favour of the theory that the closer the religious belief succeeds in pressing home to the hearts of its votaries the immediate, almost sensible touch of the divine with the human, the more will that belief attract, and the more, therefore, will it prosper and increase; and that the less it dwells upon the close, personal relation between the god adored and his worshippers,

the fewer adherents it will win? Subtract from this attractive power of a purely "human religion" the adventitious aid and support which eager controversy of itself may contribute; take from the popular religion of this country its Protestantism and its controversy with "unbelief;" take from Unitarianism its protest against Trinitarianism, and you will find indicated, with fair exactness, the sliding scale which fixes the relative popularity of the various systems of religious belief. If man is to believe in God at all, he prefers—the choice being left to himself—to image him in thought as vitally interested in the affairs of mankind, close to his creatures, almost existing for their sake alone—father, saviour, and comforter, as well as creator and preserver. With the coin of faith in his hand, the believer desires as much for the money as it will buy. And there is a subtle touch of human nature in the preference shown by the many for close personal relationship, in any sense, with the divine, even if that proximity should be connected with a rigid scheme of "election," entailing, as a consequence, many vessels of wrath, as well as chosen saints.

Closeness of personal dealing is everything with the masses, whether it be through priest and sacrament, through election decrees for better or worse, or through a mediator's all-availing sacrifice for eternal loss or gain. Somehow, a deity universally benevolent, and, as it were, easily good-natured, does not attract so much as might be thought, or as it is intended should be the case, by those who thus portray him. It is felt, perhaps, that a quality of pliant amiability, being scarcely manly, cannot be God-like. But a deity of only shadowy human relationship, with nothing appealing to the purely human element, is not popular, nor ever will be. If God there be at all, preferable, for choice, a vitally operative power, governing all his creatures and all their actions—even if a trifle exacting—than an artificer, however omnipotent, only constructing a clock-work universe and seeing it go; or even a contemplative deity, only half-interested in the puppets he has made.

That, also, which repels the crowd from Pure Theism insensibly affects the adhesion of the cultivated. One so infinitely removed as the Deity of the Theist fails, indeed, to move or constrain anybody to anything—requires too much, without affording a corresponding return. An Eternal Spirit, however omnipotent, at the distance of Sirius, somehow fails to impress. Nor, if you affect the Pantheistic view, does it make much difference. An all-pervading deity, unless he be operative in some degree, and make himself *felt*, fails to gain much attention. The age is not contemplative—refuses to be God-intoxicated on the plea of insufficient leisure for such indulgence. The highest thought has much to engross its energies in other and more remunerative

channels, and cannot squander them upon something, however elevated or sublime, which does not afford a return. And then the Theistic Deity *is* so unsubstantial—recedes so far that he fails to win concentrated attention or effort. A wet Sunday tells terribly upon the attendance at a Theistic temple.

After all, the pathetic, yearning cry of old for the "*Living God*" contains the truth. Pan himself has as much vitality as the infinitely removed object of Theistic worship—so cold and calm that a prayer offered to him dies upon the lips. And, if this be the case with Pure Theism, which professedly believes in a god, what of us, who know not if there be any god at all? When the Theistic organisation has fallen to so low an ebb for sheer want of "humanness" in its conception of the divine, what of us, who deny the possibility of any such conception whatsoever? Is ours a gospel for hedge and highway; or have we, indeed, any gospel at all?

Let us be scrupulously fair. In estimating the attractive powers of other schools of thought we discounted, in each case, the controversial element. We deducted from the popular faith its Protestantism and its Christian Evidence Society; from Unitarianism its anti-Trinitarianism. Must we not subtract from our own position any foreign aid we receive from our *supposed* controversy with Christianity, and this although Agnosticism really has nothing to do with controversy, but must stand or fall by itself. Agnosticism must be content to be judged by its own innate reasonableness, apart from the reason or unreason of other faiths; else it has no life abiding in it. A correspondent of a contemporary lately dubbed himself Agnostic because he was "sick of Christianity." This typical weakling (instance of that pernicious half-born thought which has been our bane most evilly) might as well have called himself a Brahman or a Buddhist. Our cause has served too long as a Cave of Adullum for such as he, and should be advertised as a shelter of that kind no longer. Agnostics must be agnostic; waifs and strays of faith must go elsewhere. And, though our ranks should dwindle; although, as I have pointed out elsewhere,* we should have to renounce all claim to be termed, in any sense, a "household"—whether of faith or unfaith; although not ten men in England should be found to speak with pen or tongue, say they were Agnostic, and show it by their honest words—Agnosticism, even in that extremity, would be better, nobler, braver than it is, because it would be Agnosticism pure.

To leave the ranks of faith cost most of us something. To some of us, at least, it matters little that we now erect, on this side of faiths

* "A 'Household of Unfaith'?" in "Agnostic Annual for 1886."

boundary, a tabernacle in copy of that which we have quitted. Faith has its temple and its priests ; Unfaith has neither. It remains to be seen whether it should have its organisation made up of those whose common unfaith is their sole bond ; whether upon the philosophic basis there is room for fellowship in action, as well as for sympathy and agreement ; whether, after all, separate, individual expression does not suit us best. These are points yet to be decided. Without dogmatic affirmation, it may, perhaps, be said that the signs of the times point to non-organisation as almost a necessity for us. The uninstructed can see the lesson to be learned in this respect from a consideration of popular Christianity, Unitarianism, Pure Theism, and Agnosticism in turn. Since Pure Theism can scarcely number its "two or three gathered together," what chance has Agnostic organisation—what prospect, if inaugurated, but conspicuous failure ?

That which does not court, nor readily adopt itself to, popular adhesion is out of place in seeking to win it. Agnosticism willingly attacks no creed, is not quick to proselytise, would spare a feeble faith rather than destroy it, believing that anything is preferable to crude and profitless negation. Agnosticism, again, has no authoritative standards, by approaching to which the reputation for orthodoxy may be gained, or by defection from which heterodoxy may be embraced. It has definitions, but they are of common consent, not of authority. There are expositions Agnostic and counter expositions ; but none of them claim to be unerring. There is no infallible dictum that we know of which compels us to form ourselves into an association. Were there any such ultimate authority, we might ask it to furnish us with articles of unbelief. After all, there is nothing magical in the plan of associated action. It is habit, and nothing more. Let us give unconcerted action, individual expression, with individual responsibility, a trial ; disregard the time-honoured initial expedient of a committee or union, and, eschewing organisation, save such as literary companionship (frailest of bonds !) may bring, leave united action to those of stereotyped creed, and speak individually to individuals, as man to men.

G. M. McC.

THE MIRACULOUS.

THERE appears to be a growing tendency on the part of the present age to ascribe all unexpected or unusual occurrences to the operation of natural processes. Nature is being continually put before caprice. Supernatural interference is no longer resorted to as an explanation of strange incidents; these are looked upon as being effected by the natural sequence of ordinary laws. Lunar eclipses, destructive storms and floods, pestilential visitations, and sudden deaths are no longer supposed to be the direct results of disobedience and sin. It is not now the common belief that thunder is "God speaking," and lightning the "flashing of his eyes." Cases of abundant harvests, commercial prosperity, victory in battle, are not now often cited as illustrations of the bounty and mercy of a gratified deity. Such notions, acquired by man in his most rude and primitive state, although far from being extinct even in the most civilised communities, are slowly, but surely, losing their old engrossing force and distinctness.

It is almost impossible for the present generation to conceive the foolish sophisms and revolting excesses to which the attribution of natural phenomena to supernatural causes has led the human mind. In the dark days that elapsed before the revival of European learning, every peculiar disease, every fall of rain or snow, every earthquake—in short, every common accident of life that in any way affected an individual's or a nation's interest—was unquestioningly supposed to be the direct result of the intervention of Providence. All thought, all business, was permeated with a thick stifling atmosphere of mysticism; religion was completely hidden under an ill-fitting garb woven of fables and miracles; while at the same time the clergy were becoming richer and richer, and the people poorer and poorer.

Fear has always exercised a great influence over the popular reception of religious doctrines. We can clearly see its hand in the inhuman persecutions and hideous atrocities perpetrated on those who had communications with the Evil One; in the fastings and dancing manias of ancient and mediæval times; and in the cowardly intolerance of contrary opinions so often manifested at the present day. Men believed that the world was haunted by beings owing allegiance to Satan, and

possessed of superhuman strength and knowledge, who were perpetually seeking to tempt them and their fellows to wickedness and vice. Opposed to these were numbers of good spirits, or angels, whose office it was to guide, or rather push, man through life, and to contend against the malignant hosts of Satan. When good fortune accrued to any individual, it was regarded as a reward in recognition of faithful obedience to the deity, or of generous donations to the Church. When, on the other hand, a person was seized with illness, or other misfortune happened to him, the occurrence was the outward visible sign of divine wrath; or it was the result of sorcery practised by some enemy of the afflicted one. No sooner was this conclusion arrived at than the people fixed upon some one—often a defenceless old woman—who, they supposed, was guilty of the deed. It is unnecessary to dwell upon the excruciating tortures undergone by the victims of the idea of diabolic agency. Their very bones racked asunder, lashed until the blood poured off their backs in a stream, their bodies slowly burned to ashes—these and other cruelties too revolting to mention were some of the consequences of a belief in the supernatural under but one of its aspects.

It has been truly said that the less a religion is based on reason, the more prone will its followers be to depend on the use of miracles to convince doubters and to gain adherents. During the fifth and sixth centuries, when Christianity had become imbued with the spirit of dogma, and had consequently lost much of its intrinsic power of persuasion, we find the number of miracles multiplying at a prodigious rate. Hermits relied on angels to supply them with food; visions of the Virgin Mary encouraged men to do good and eschew the evil; the sight or touch of saintly relics cured all manner of disease and deformity; and the dead were raised to life on the utterance of a word. Not only, however, were the good rewarded, but secrets were dragged to light, and the evil punished by supernatural means. It is related that an infant, who had previously partaken of the bread and wine of the Eucharist *from the hands of a layman*, was presented at the church for the purpose of going through the ceremony in accordance with the orthodox custom. No sooner had the officiating priest placed the bread in the infant's mouth than it commenced screaming and trembling, and otherwise showing its intense dislike to the proceeding. The onlookers at once believed this to be the sign of a guilty conscience, and the parents of the child were severely punished. Every event was viewed from the standpoint of superstition and credulity. And this was the mental condition, not merely of the ignorant masses, but of the most highly cultured men, both lay and ecclesiastical, of the time.

Now-a-days the profundity of the belief in providential interpositions is measured by the state of civilisation reached by the people among

whom it is found. Among savages and semi-barbarians whom civilisation has failed, or partially failed, to touch, superstition is seen to act in its most baneful and inhuman form ; in isolated country districts we find the same element under a modified and somewhat gentler aspect ; while among the truly cultured it has become virtually *nil*. Nevertheless, if we were to trace the progress of the decay in the belief in miraculous interferences, we should perceive that there has been no thorough critical examination into the evidence of miracles, and, consequently, there has been no decisive rejection of them as being utterly incredible and contrary to fact. Comparatively few deny their truth, or say they are absolutely incredible. Hundreds and thousands have never put themselves to the trouble of thinking about the matter at all ; these persons, forming the large majority of the general public, receive miracles "on trust." Rather, then, should we find the cause in changed *tendencies* of thought and feeling.

During the last two or three centuries there has been an ever-increasing tendency to trust to reason and common sense, rather than to the traditional dictates of authority. Although the Reformers themselves attached fully as much importance to miracles and superstitious observances as the Roman Catholics, yet the Reformation seems to have given a strong impetus to the movement. Acting as a wedge, it gradually revolutionised the old habits of thought to make room for the modern. Some of our orthodox friends declare that the object of miracles was in some cases to prove to demonstration the divine mission of those by whom they were wrought, or, in others, merely to make known the might of God. It is added that the reason miracles are no longer in vogue is that the human mind, having passed through the stages of its infancy and childhood, does not now require such palpable proofs of his omnipotence. May we not suggest, however, as a probable reason for the non-occurrence of miracles, that, man's observing and reasoning faculties being more developed than formerly, he would investigate the evidence of reputed miracles more closely than heretofore ?

With the advance of civilisation the belief in the miraculous has been growing fainter and fainter ; the higher the intellectual character of the period, the fewer the miracles. It is not long ago since a mere handful of independent thinkers doubted and wrote against the belief in witchcraft and diabolic possession. Since then the number of miracles has been constantly dwindling, until now there only remain a few recorded in Scripture (speaking of the general Christian community), which are themselves losing their old place. Science has done good service in eliminating from the mind the idea of a series of grotesque and panoramic interferences on the part of a capricious will, and in presenting instead thereof a conception of unchanging, ever-acting law. In

the words of Professor Huxley, "she is teaching the world that the ultimate Court of Appeal is observation and experiment, and not theological authority ; she is teaching us to estimate the value of evidence, and she is creating a firm and living faith in the existence of immutable moral and physical laws." The philosophical systems of Bacon, Locke, Hume, and other Freethinkers, are all working in the same direction. The expanding comprehensiveness of modern thought, the amplification of physical science, and the progress of knowledge in general, have had a great influence, more indirect than direct, over the belief in providential interpositions. They have created an atmosphere in which miracles, simply as such, do not and cannot flourish. As a striking illustration of the attitude of the present age towards the supernatural, witness the efforts of some to form theories of the moral government of the universe, in which the chief end arrived at is the "reconciliation" of Scripture with the revelations of science. Or, again, the attempts of some to show that miracles were the result of perfectly natural laws *acting at opportune moments* ; these persons forgetting that miracles thus brought about lack one most essential characteristic—namely, that of being *supernatural* phenomena.

Without taking into consideration the overwhelming misery and frightful mortality ensuing from persecutions, martyrdoms, and suicidal immolations, we have much to feel thankful for in this changed attitude of opinion towards the supernatural. Some of its indirect results have already manifested themselves in the most unmistakable and significant manner. Knowledge of the physical laws of health and disease, of plenty and famine, has been enlarged during the present century with a rapidity unparalleled in previous history. This scientific activity is causing men to renounce the vain attempts to turn the course of nature by the mere force of supplication, and in their place to substitute the efforts of their own mental and bodily strength. Had men continued to have implicit faith in the power of prayer and providence to avert pestilence, they would still allow their houses and streets to be destitute of all sanitary arrangements—a state of things so common in the "theological" era.

As in physical, so in intellectual and moral phenomena : men are beginning to learn that individual and national prosperity and adversity do not depend upon the vigilance of guardian angels, for a continuance of which they must devote their attention to magnificent temples, ritualistic formalities, and other priestly instrumentalities, but on themselves, and on themselves alone. They are beginning to understand that the reign of law cannot be rebelled against without the certainty of bringing upon themselves and upon their children the full and inevitable consequences of the act of omission or of commission of

which they have been guilty. They are beginning to understand that fastings and genuflexions, ceremonies and services, will not make them one degree the better ; and, indeed, by creating fear and hypocrisy, will make them much the worse. Finally, they are beginning to comprehend the fact that the truest intelligence is in him who gives the most perfect, implicit, and, withal, reasonable obedience to the immutable moral, intellectual, and physical laws of nature.

F. PAGE WILSON.

THE GENESIS STORY OF THE FALL OF MAN.

It will readily be granted by every clear-thinking mind that revelation, said to be of Divine origin, should be beyond the necessity of having to be interpreted by man; and, further, that where such revelation is recorded in language which, in the letter, presents a meaning very different to that which it is subsequently said to mean, it affords the strongest possible justification for rejecting its claim to Divine inspiration. Short of absolute consistency as the outcome of Divine revelation made through human mediums, the permanent visible presence of a personal God on earth, instructing, guiding, and governing by wise laws, is a *sine quâ non*. The inconsistency involved in a revelation by God to man having to be explained by man has been incisively illustrated in this magazine; and it is a point of such great importance that it cannot be too often insisted upon. The "sacred volume" literally teems with inconsistencies and contradictions of both revelation and doctrine, but which are not permitted to come within the challenge of reason because Church "authority," on behalf of God, which has ever made large demands upon the suppression of man's natural perceptions, has forbidden it. What is this but an arrogant assumption of the power to interpret the Divine character by implying that the Supreme Being, from whom, even Christians acknowledge, man has received the endowment of reasoning faculty, himself acts in an unreasoning manner? What is inspiration? The inspirer of the minds of "holy men of old"—that spirit of the Supreme Being—was the most eccentric and irresponsible of mysterious agents. Those holy men never knew when this spirit would stir their minds, and they usually were ignorant of the meaning of his communications. Listen to the voice of one of the authorised dignitaries of the Established Church, Dean Goulburn, who, writing on the "Inspiration and Study of the Holy Scriptures," observes: "The human mind in inspiration resembles an Æolian harp: all its faculties are ready strung within: there are the chords of the imagination, the memory, the judgment; but it cannot give forth the sound of a divine oracle until the breath of God and Christ—even his gracious influence, who came down from Heaven with a sudden great sound, as of a rushing mighty wind—sweeps across it, and wakens the chords into

harmony. Hence a very remarkable feature of Holy Scripture, which I may call *fitfulness*.^{*} Our Lord, speaking to Nicodemus of the spirits' operation as resembling that of the wind, says: 'The wind bloweth where it listeth.' It does not come and go at man's beck; nor does it move, like the tides, in obedience to laws which man has ascertained. The wind sweeping across an Æolian harp is fitful in its gusts: when you expect the cadence to be continued to the end, so as to give a satisfactory termination to the ear, it suddenly lulls and dies away; then as suddenly wakes up a melody of a different kind; but every melody is wild and weird, not prosecuted upon *system* or *method*, and baffling oftentimes in its close the anticipations to which its beginning gave rise. Can any thoughtful person fail to perceive features analogous to all this in the Holy Scriptures?" It would be strange indeed if he did not, O Dean! "It has been often remarked that the Scriptures nowhere present us with a methodical system of theology, with creeds and articles drawn up in orderly arrangement. It is not to be wondered at. The human mind has its method, its orderly process, from rudiments to profound doctrines; its power of analysis, and of evolving abstract lessons from statements made in reference to some one particular occasion; but Holy Scripture does not proceed from the human mind, but from that mysterious person in the Godhead, whose ways are not as our ways, whose method is his own, and who does not submit himself to the narrow conditions imposed upon human intelligence; who, in short, is not an earthly musician, conceiving and executing a melody according to technical rules of music, but a wind blowing where it listeth. Observe, too, how the Evangelists heap together, with scarcely any discernible connection, the sayings of our blessed Lord, where an uninspired writer would have given them in the form of systematic discourses. Doubtless they noted down each weighty word of their master, without studying connection or consecutiveness of argument, just as the Holy Ghost touched the chord of their memories. Observe, again, *how little the New Testament applications of the Old Testament are such as the unaided understanding of man would have made*; how, if the human reason were made a canon for trying them (God forbid it should be), some of them would be rejected as fanciful—particularly the allegory of Hagar and Sarah (Gal. iv. 21—end, &c.)—how little they are generally in accordance with preconceived notions, and how utterly untouched by the New Testament writers are many obvious departments of type—Joseph, for example, as a type of Christ—and prophecy. If the Scriptures had *originated* with the human mind, it would not have been so." (!) "But the motive power which swayed the human

* The italics here and elsewhere are mine.—J. K.

mind in this case was that wind which bloweth where it listeth. *No account can be given of the operations of this mysterious agent.* Sometimes it lulls all of a sudden, or veers round in an entirely opposite direction, as in the forty-third of Isaiah, where, after God has been expostulating with his people, both for being wearied of his service and wearying him with their iniquities, he melts over them with that sudden burst of exquisite tenderness: 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.' "

Having by beautiful illustration shown the eccentric way in which the Spirit of God deals with ignorant man to be perfectly satisfactory—such as becomes a Divine Being in communication with the creatures he created, the author quotes St. Paul for the authority that "all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God" (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17), but intimates that they can only be interpreted by those who have the *clue* to them. He paraphrases the verse thus: "I am going, Timothy, to my master and yours; but I do not leave you without guidance, nor without inspired guidance. From a child thou hast known the sacred writings of Moses and the prophets; thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice, instilled into thy childish mind their venerable precepts. The faith in Christ, which thou hast learned from me, has taught thee to see in those old precepts a wisdom, a beauty, a significance, *which no man can see save he who has the clue to them.* To this guidance, then, I now refer thee—the guidance of the Scriptures *interpreted and illuminated by the catholic faith*, as a transparency is by a light placed within it. Thou wilt say, perhaps, that this is a poor substitute for the counsel of a living apostle; but it is not so. Scripture is not a dead, but a living, book. I remember that Stephen, in his apology, called the communications of God to Moses '*lively oracles.*' And so they are. All the oracles of God are *lively.* And why? Because God has inbreathed into them the life of his spirit. 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.' " But it required the further inspiration of the spirit to find the *clue* to understand them. St. Paul gave the clue to some of the Scripture enigmas, and he has written a great deal expository of the Christian or the Catholic faith; but it requires the utmost mental efforts of the initiated in the modern Christian Church to expound the expositions of St. Paul. But the initiated themselves exhibit diverse degrees of initiation, for they do not agree upon very many points of Christian doctrine. This is notorious, as the disintegration of the Christian Church sufficiently demonstrates, and in irony it may be asked:

Divine Inspirer, Thou art where?—O where?
Echo's sigh reverberates reply, "Nowhere!"

There is no plainer example of divergence from obvious deduction than

is afforded by the Genesis account of the creation of man. Christian theologians will admit, from perforce of necessity, that the structure of their faith is built upon the fall of man, which event, it is supposed, is narrated in the opening chapters. Although the incidents which make up the narrative will not bear out this construction, since they point to an advance of intelligence rather than a fall from a perfect state, yet the latter is accepted as the correct interpretation, as being sanctioned by the language of Scripture and confirmed by developed facts in Christian history. This fall being the basis, the edifice erected upon it is the redemption of man by the voluntary sacrifice of the only Son of God, in atonement demanded by God for the outrage inflicted on his purity by man's sinful infraction of his righteous law. This demand implies, as is acknowledged, that man himself was responsible for his own fall, and that from himself alone, on the principle of equity, should have come the reparation necessary to satisfy the demand of divine justice. But man's condition, physically and spiritually, was immediately changed by sin from perfection to imperfection; and, being for that reason unable or unfit to give satisfaction, a vicarious atonement was accepted. The cause of man's fall, and the complete wreck he became, spiritually and physically, in consequence, may be stated from the remarks of an authorised interpreter. Man was created in the image of God, was endowed with a free will, but fell from God's kingdom. "By believing a lie—the serpent's double lie—a lie about God, that God grudges and is not true, and a lie about man, that in disobedience he shall be as God—the divine life in man's soul was poisoned and destroyed, and man was separated from God, and died to God's world. And because to a being like man, made in God's image, death cannot be the end of existence, but is only a passing out of one world into another, by this death to God man, who is a spirit, lost the place which God had given him, the Paradise, called by Paul 'the third heaven,' and was driven out, and fell into the kingdom of darkness, his inward life turned like sweet wine to sourest vinegar, into a life of ceaseless aching restlessness; to escape which he turns to outward things, hating to come to himself even for a moment, unconsciously driven by his own inward dissatisfaction to seek diversion from himself in any outward care, pleasure, or vanity; while his body became like that of the beasts, subject to the elements of this world, and to all the change and toil which make up 'the course of this world.'"^{*} This is an amplification of the tenth article of the Church of England, and may be taken as giving the general conception of the situation.

The keynote to all this trouble is man's responsibility. Was he

* "Restitution of all Things," Rev. A. J.

really responsible? One reply, which will seem very conclusive in the negative to the "intelligent reader," shall be given by another authorised interpreter. In a recently-issued commentary on the Old Testament, edited by the Lord Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, dealing with the narrative of the temptation of Adam, the commentator remarks:—"They were naked.—This is the description of *perfect child-like innocence*, and belongs naturally to beings who, *as yet, knew neither good nor evil*. It is not, however, the conclusion of the marriage section, where it would be indelicate, but the introduction to the account of the temptation, where it prepares the way for man's *easy* fall. Moreover, there is a play upon the words of the two verses. Man is *arom* = naked: the serpent is *arum* = crafty. Thus, in *guileless simplicity*, our first parents fell in with the tempting serpent, who, in obvious contrast with their untried innocence, is described as a being of special subtilty."

It will be instructive to the thoughtful mind to dwell for a moment upon the idea here presented of innocent beings such as these being held responsible for the introduction of sin and death into the world! But, in this commentator's mind, this is quite compatible with responsibility. He remarks upon Adam laying the blame of his fall upon the woman: "She gave me.—There is again in Adam the same passiveness which we noticed.....He has *little sense of responsibility*, and no feeling that he had a duty towards Eve, and ought to have *watched over her and helped her when tempted*.....His conscience still seems utterly unmoved." Why, poor man, was he not as guilelessly simple as his wife? But, if man's fall was so easily accomplished, his redemption was a task of infinite difficulty. "The doctrine of the Incarnation and Atonement, set forth in the Gospel, shows God so grieving over the ruin of man that (if the expression is allowable) Omnipotence appears to have strained itself to the utmost for his redemption. The revelation of God becoming incarnate, and in the form of one of the lost race suffering all the penalty of sin, enduring all the woes which sin entails, proves at once the awful nature of the catastrophe, the intense difficulty of the undertaking, and the infinite love of God. It must have been a matter of unspeakable and awful issue to have been worthy of such a sacrifice. It must have been a matter of infinite difficulty, since Divine wisdom could find no easier plan of salvation."*

From these details we get three abstract ideas:—1. Irresponsibility of Divine action, as exemplified in the eccentric operations of the Spirit. 2. Responsibility of man in contrast with Divine irresponsibility. 3. Difficulty in Divine execution. By testing the reasonableness of the assumption of man's responsibility (2) a conclusion may be arrived at

* "Mystery of Faith," *Contemporary Review*, May, 1885.

as to the reasonableness or otherwise of the assumption of God's irresponsibility (1). The God of Christianity is a personal God and Creator. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John i. 1, 2, 3). As this God, then, was the sole creator of the universe—the sole creator of all life, whether of beings celestial or beings terrestrial—it is obvious that man did not create himself; his degree of responsibility must, therefore, be estimated from the degree of perfection with which he was endowed at the moment the Lord God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. It may be advanced, axiomatically, that there can be no infallible responsibility in the absence of absolute perfection. There are many degrees and varieties of views of human responsibility; and it is difficult for human judgment on human actions to decide in every case where responsibility lies. Infallibility is not apparent in the present state of humanity; it is not an inherent qualification. Was it ever inherent? Did Adam leave the hands of his creator in every respect perfect? His alleged Fall gives the reply in a complete and emphatic negative! *A perfect man could not have fallen from a perfect state.* There is proof of this by contrast. Christ is represented as having been subjected to the temptation of Satan; but he fell not. Why? Because he is said to have been "very God of very God"—perfection embodied! Adam was created *imperfect*; but was it the fault of Adam that he was so created? The fault lay with his creator, and that creator, by virtue of his perfection, was *alone* responsible for his creature's fall. Yet there arose a great cry for justice, for an atonement for the outrage inflicted on his purity—an outrage the outcome of his own imperfect production. Cicero epitomised justice as consisting of doing no injury to men. If the Christian's God made man imperfect, he perpetrated a Divine injury upon the human race; and it was *to man* the atonement should have been made. And if it be objected that this verdict is, after all, only the judging of God by man, who himself is unable to judge perfectly, the reply is, that perfection would be literally incapable of creating imperfection. It would be the only limit to the power of an immaculate and all-powerful being.

To attribute imperfect design to a perfect being is just as illogical as to associate difficulty of execution (3) with all-mighty power. Difficulty of execution belongs to man alone; and, as man is imperfect, and has always been so, it is impossible he could have been created as the direct act of a perfect personal God. Man knows himself to be imperfect; therefore he is justified in concluding that he is not the outcome of perfection.

JOSEPH KIRK.

EVOLUTION AND SPECIAL CREATION.

THIRD PAPER.

Origin of Man.—It has already been stated that the remains of man are met with only in the most recent deposits of a geological character. About this fact there will be no dispute. No doubt human beings have been in existence for a much longer period than is generally supposed: the short term of six thousand years, which our fathers considered to cover man's entire history, pales into insignificance before the vast periods which we know to have rolled their course since human life began. But that fact in no way affects the question before us. Man was certainly the last animal that appeared, as he was the highest. If it be asked, Why highest as well as last? the answer is that because, by the process of evolution, the highest must come last. This is the law that we have seen operating all through the physical universe so far as that universe has disclosed to us its mighty secrets, hidden for ages, but now revealed to scientific observation and experiment. Man came, as other organic bodies came, by no special creation, but by the great forces of nature, moving always in the same direction, and working to the same end. As far as the physical powers are concerned, it will not be difficult to conceive the same laws in operation as to his origin which originated the various other forms of organic beings. His body is built up of the same materials, upon precisely the same plan: during life he is subject to the same growth and decay, building up and pulling down of tissues, and it is but reasonable to suppose that the same forces originated his beginning, as we know they will some day terminate his existence.

Mr. Darwin made a bold stroke when he gave to the world his "Descent of Man." In 1859 he published the first edition of his work on "The Origin of Species," which fell like a thunderbolt into the religious camp. The commotion it caused was tremendous, and the effect to-day can hardly be imagined; so tolerant have we grown of late, and such a change has passed over the scene within the past quarter of a century. The most violent opposition raged against the new views; ridicule, denunciation, and abuse were hurled at the head of the man who had propounded so preposterous a theory as that all organic things

had sprung from a few simple living forms very low down in the scale of being. Then came the larger work, entitled "Animals and Plants under Domestication," brimful of facts of a most startling character, supporting the theory advanced in the previous book, and challenging refutation on all hands. In the face of these facts the public mind cooled down a little, opposition became milder, some opponents were converted, and others manifested indifference. The major part of those who still adhered to the supernatural and special creations held that, even if the theory of Evolution turned out to be true, it would not apply to man, who was a being possessed of an immortal soul, and, therefore, belonging to a different order of creatures than any other animals, and that Mr. Darwin never intended to include human beings in the organic structures thus originated.

In this state the controversy remained until 1871, when Mr. Darwin took the bull by the horns, and at one stroke swept away the last stronghold of special creation by showing that humanity was no exception to the great law of evolution; for man, like other animals, had originated in natural selection. The facts given in the book on "The Descent of Man" are both powerful and pertinent. This, however, is not the place to dwell upon natural selection, and it is only referred to so far as it supports evolution. The difficulties that have been placed in the way of the application of this principle to man have not had much reference to his bodily organs, but mainly to his mental and moral powers, his social faculties, and the emotional side of his nature. True, a controversy raged for a short time between Huxley and Owen as to whether there was not a special structure in the human brain not to be found in the next animals lower in the scale of being; but this contention has long since died out, and to-day no anatomist of any note will be found contending for the existence of any such organ. That the human brain differs considerably from the brain of any lower animal no one who is at all acquainted with the subject will deny; but this is difference in degree, and not arising from the presence of any special structure in the one which is absent in the other. Man, therefore, must look for his origin just where he seeks for that of the inferior creatures.

The science of embryology, which is now much more carefully studied, and, consequently, much better known than at any period in the past, lends very powerful support to evolution, though, perhaps, little to natural selection. "The primordial germs," says Huxley, "of a man, a dog, a bird, a fish, a beetle, a snail, and a polyp are in no essential structural respects distinguishable" ("Lay Sermons"). Each organism, in fact, commences its individual career at the same point—that is, in a single cell. These cells are of the same chemical composition, approximately of the same size, and appear to be in all respects identical.

Yet the one develops into a fish, another into a reptile, a third into a bird, a fourth into a dog, and a fifth into a man. The process is the same in all up to a certain point. First the cell divides into two, then into four, eight, sixteen, and so on, until a particular condition is reached, called by Haeckel morula, when a totally different set of changes occur. In the case of the higher animals the development of the embryo so clearly resembles that of man up to a very late period that the appearances presented are exceedingly similar.

The believers in special creation have a tremendous difficulty to confront here. Evolution upon this point clearly carries off the palm. If it be not actually demonstrated to be true, yet the arguments in its favour are so powerful and the facts upon which they are based so strong and numerous that opposition must hide its head abashed.

CHARLES WATTS.

ON SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE.

IF there is no such thing as absolute truth, the search for it is vain; if we admit, as we must, that all truth whatever is relative, and by the nature of the case limited, let us make the most of such truth as falls to our lot or that it may be our privilege to discover, in a modest and tentative fashion. Let us rid ourselves of all pride of intellect and pride of heart, and humbly acknowledge our limitations, which are many. Pride of whatever sort may be excused in those who have what is called revealed truth direct from heaven. They obtain it by other than the ordinary channels, and they are naturally both proud and grateful for the high privilege. Highly-favoured persons as they claim to be, it is only fitting that they should exhibit consequential airs and speak with an authority we cannot affect, who have obtained truth only by the painful labours of others. We inherit truth from great predecessors, and are often saddened at the recollection of the price it has cost, and humbled as we ask ourselves, Who are we and what have we done that such wisdom should be ours? Alas! we are nobodies, and have done nothing deserving a tithe of Humanity's unspeakable gifts! Let us make the most of them while the day lasts, and ere the night of death comes. If we cannot enrich the gifts let us at least hand them down unimpaired to our successors for their better and nobler use and adornment.

This attitude of mind towards all truth will be one favourable to its extension, and we shall divine (probably more than divine) what the Apostle meant by "Speaking the truth in love"—the only way in which truth should be spoken or published abroad. If we rightly regard the matter, we shall see that it is solely by its loving proclamation good can be wrought. The truth we speak may be so logically convincing as to approve itself to the understanding; but, unless it appeals to the emotions as well, little good will come of it. Our logical labours will be thrown away if they are untouched by emotion. Our lips must be touched by a live coal from the altar of love. The intellect may silently acquiesce in these truths, and there leave them. We must show how truth bears on daily life and practice; how necessary it is, and how it glorifies right conduct. What worlds of beautiful and loving relations it reveals to us between beings, objects, and events, before it comes home to men's bosoms; once there, the truth is not slow to operate, and who

shall set bounds to its operations? Who shall declare when truth's work is done after the heart has assimilated it and the life proclaimed it? Truth is long in forcing an entry into the human soul; but, if she enshrines herself there, nothing can dispossess her. Not life, nor death, nor principalities, nor powers. Truth may be unbeautiful at first sight; there may be no form or comeliness that men should desire her; but let man discover her hidden beauties and attractions, and not for worlds would he part with her, so precious does she become, so indispensable. And she has compensations for the loss of all things, should man suffer it, which nothing else has. She gives a confidence, strength, and serenity which is hers alone, and with such gifts men endure, bear, and suffer hunger, thirst, poverty, loss of friends, heart-weariness, brain-weariness, and even martyrdom.

In the "Imitation of Christ," à Kempis makes Truth to say:—"I teach without noise of words, without confusion of opinions, without ambition of honour, without the scuffling of arguments. I instruct men to flee honours, to suffer injuries, to place all hope in me, to desire nothing out of me, and, above all things, ardently to love me..... To some men I speak common things, to others things special; to some I appear sweetly by signs and figures, but to some I reveal mysteries with much light. The voice of books is, indeed, one; but it instructs not all alike; for I am the teacher of the truth within, I am the searcher of the heart, the discerner of the thoughts, the setterforward of good actions, distributing to every man as I judge meet."

It goes without saying that the best of all ways of proclaiming truth *is to live it*; to show its attractiveness in our life and conduct, so that all persons brought into contact with us may see that our thoughts, affections, and activities are true throughout—coined in the mint of truth itself. So living, when we speak truth in love, we shall speak with irresistible cogency. The happy union of theory and practice will give effect to all we speak, say, and do. It will be perceived—nay, acclaimed—that truth alone makes us free, strong, manly, sincere, and tender.

No argument will be needed to enforce truth any more than the existence of the noonday sun requires one. Indeed, we shall come to see how vain is all human babblement in the way of argument; how rarely the cause of truth is promoted by discussion; how often injured and damaged! Hot disputants do not proclaim the truth in love, even if they know what truth is, which they rarely do. They strive for personal victory, and truth rarely serves all personal aims. Debaters who, like the Greek Sophists, plead on all sides of a subject, care naught for truth, but "to make the worse appear the better reason." Cato was right in insisting that such persons should be

expelled from Rome as a public nuisance and danger. They proved such.

Public contentions further Truth's cause but little (if at all), as the advocates fight for victory, not truth ; and their several supporters care only for their coming off victors. Each advocate (or his friends) believes or acts as if he believed his opponent was hopelessly in the wrong, and could teach nothing. Each party is confirmed in its prejudices, ignorances, and its possession of half-truths ; and, if not confirmed, is angry with the opposite party for disturbing the grounds of its complacency. Persons who set themselves publicly to maintain certain theses do it at all costs—that of Truth not least. Vain, then, is the hope of serving the cause of Truth by such means. Doubts and difficulties of all kinds are easily removed and cleared up in a private conversation, in which human vanity cannot air itself much, and the self-love of those taking interest in it is unlikely to be offended. Here again we see how Truth flees “the scuffling of arguments,” and is accessible to her quiet and persistent seekers. George Sand well observes : “We have fallen to disputing, which is the grave of all truth and all strength.” “When the collision of opinion is very strong, two good men may meet and only be confirmed in their prejudices against one another ; for, in order that one may elicit the spiritual sympathies of the other, a certain liberality is a prerequisite. Without this, each prepares to shield himself from attack, or even holds out weapons of offence. Thus ‘articles of Communion’ are essentially articles of Disunion” (F. W. Newman).

The “hear, hears” and “cheers” of excited auditories are seldom on truth's side—most commonly ring at some platitude or popular fallacy. Neither does truth avail when proclaimed by persons who disregard the beliefs, habits, and feelings of others. We are not likely to be convinced, or even favourably impressed, with those persons who charitably suppose or designate us fools, knaves, dolts, superstitious, priest-ridden hypocrites and slaves, because we do not agree with them, and who ride roughshod over things inestimably dear to us, destroying, or attempting to destroy, what it is utterly out of their power to replace. When will such persons learn the simple and oft-repeated truth that he only destroys who replaces ? When will they learn that what they misrepresent and malign is as much truth as what they propound ? When will malcontents realise that no one person or party has a monopoly of truth—that things which would be a lie to us is truth to others ; that views which to us are objectionable—nay, abominable—are acceptable, even beautiful, to others ?

All truth is relative, and the sooner this is learned by all theological opponents and non-theological disputants the better. They will cease to be theological, and, probably, controversial. They will make those

allowances which are so necessary where people are unequally educated or advanced and see things differently. To the ordinary Protestant a Roman Catholic is superstitious, and *vice versâ*. To the ordinary Christian a Secularist is hateful, and *vice versâ*. Whereas, rightly viewed, each is the effect of his antecedents and surroundings. Each prizes his half or one-third truth, thinking it a whole, and ungenerously estimates his brother's share. The thinker sees the error of both, as well as the truth of both, and how inevitable truth and error are. He knows that error itself was once truth. The Protestant, however illogical he may be, is true relatively—that is, Protestantism is true to him, especially if he lives up to it. The same is true of the Catholic, the Christian, and the Secularist. Each order of persons represents stages of growth and development, and both the growth and development are unequal. Neither can fling stones at the other, or indulge in reproaches.

Occupations enlarge organs in the human body, and some have, in consequence, large hearts, some large brains, others well-developed muscles or a highly-organised nervous system. Analogous processes take place in the collective organism, and it is one of the truisms of Social Science that some sections of Humanity are more highly advanced than others, and that Humanity as a whole has been unequally educated. The thing can be satisfactorily explained, and must be allowed for without unkind reflections or odious comparisons.

To return. "Speaking the truth in love" will demand of us more cultured heads and kinder hearts. It will cause us to hope all things, believe all things, endure all things, think no ill, seek not our own. At the same time, it will not palter with truth; it will call things by their right names, not call evil good, or good evil. "Speaking the truth in love" is possible with straight and fair-hitting, and very plain speaking. There are many things which demand both. But the personal element will be kept down, self-subordinated; animus restrained or minimised. Truth will be so declared as to favourably impress her hearers and prompt them to instruction and amendment; that is, she will appear in her own proper glory. When this happy time arrives the political and religious parties now so painfully divided will work harmoniously together. Then the prophecy will be realised, and the lion will lie down with the lamb, and men will beat their swords into plough-shares, their spears into reaping-hooks. The time is a long way off; but each of us can, in his own way, hasten its advent. Each of us can make it nearer in his own family circle and among his friends. The Kingdom of Heaven cometh not with observation, *but is within you*.

J. KAINES, D.Sc.

THE AGE OF THE EARTH AND OF LIVING THINGS.

SECOND PAPER.

IN concluding my reference to Professor Dawson, who certainly approaches nearer to orthodox views than any other writer among men of science I have met with, I fail to see that even he can be honestly quoted in support of "our previous views." Speaking of the day when man first stood erect and gazed upon the world, he says: "On that day a world, *for long ages the abode of brute creatures*, became for the first time the habitation of a rational soul." My reading of sacred history is that brute creatures, and all other creatures, including man, appeared on the earth in the same week of the year one. If this be true, and Mr. Dawson be right about the brutes, men as well as brutes must have had their abode on the earth long ages before the 6,000 years began.

Mr. Dawson dates his book 1880, Montreal: let us now turn to another equally orthodox authority—Mr. Charles L. Brace, who dates his book 1863, Hastings-on-the-Hudson. As Mr. Brace's views may not be so well known, I quote the concluding words of his volume ("Manual of Ethnology"), in which he states that he believes the Creator designed the development of each human being into "the perfect man in Christ Jesus," and the building up of an organic "kingdom of God." He, too, speaks of "the most careful and philosophical" Sir C. Lyell. In alluding to the same accumulated facts as Mr. Dawson, and to the time before the Channel separated England and France, he says the evidence has been carefully weighed by impartial and experienced men; and what does the evidence prove? The effect upon the judgment of Mr. Brace is thus described: "The mind is lost in astonishment in looking back at such a vast antiquity of human beings—a tribe of men in existence hundreds of thousands of years before any of the received dates of creation" (p. 341). Whether these men were the first, or were destroyed before the creation of our own race, he is unable to determine, but "can merely state the probability of a vast antiquity to human beings, and of the existence of the fossil or pre-Adamite man." Mr. Brace gives nine closely-printed pages of authorities, with titles and dates of publication. M. Quatrefages ("Human Species," 1881) passes under review the evidences referred

to by Messrs. Dawson and Brace, in order to ascertain an answer to the question of time. The 6,000 years are surpassed by centuries by the alluvial deposits of the Saône. While he is unable to grant millions of years between us and the glacial times, he thinks we may be almost certain that they terminated within 100,000 years in Europe. But, even if we reject the highest estimate—100,000 years, by M. Forel—the lowest estimate of M. Arcelin “leaves us with the certainty that the present glacial period goes back much further than 8,000 years.” The belief that the climate was the same at the appearance of man as it is now “modern science has proved to be an error.” Whenever we date the close of the glacial period at that time “man existed in Europe.” The conclusion is that “the most careful judges acknowledge that man has seen the accomplishment of one of the great changes on the surface of the globe.....He has lived in one of the geological epochs to which he was but lately to be a complete stranger; he has been contemporary with species of mammalia which have not even seen the commencement of the present epoch. There is, then, nothing impossible in the idea that he should have survived other species of the same class, or have witnessed other geological revolutions, or appeared upon the globe with the first representatives of the type to which he belongs by organisation.” It is obvious that, man being a mammal, he could exist under the same conditions and at the same time as other mammals. M. Quatrefages reminds us that our globe has passed through several epochs, that living beings have *not* appeared simultaneously, and that our fauna and flora were preceded by very different ones. He also considers the method of calculating the 100,000 years a good one. It is as follows:—Suppose a bed of peat to have a regular growth, and a coin to be found at the depth of four feet, marked as belonging to the twelfth century, it would follow that the growth above it could not have taken more than 600 years: a bronze hatchet found six times as deep would give 3,600 years as its age.

In the case of the Lake of Geneva, the Rhone deposits mud in it after the melting of the snow. M. Forel first ascertained the annual volume of the deposit, and then the volume of the whole lake, and thus calculated the time required to fill up the whole by the sediment of the Rhone. The alluvial deposits have been formed since the retreat of the glaciers, and are in proportion of one to three, so that they require one-third the time calculated, which amounts to the 100,000 years mentioned. Granting this, it only indicates the possible date of man's appearance in Europe, not in Paradise or Palestine.

Professor Ramsey concludes that there must have been in North Wales three glacial epochs, changing the elevation of the land, which Drayson says must have occurred, according to his theory, 13,000 B.C.,

44,000 B.C., and 75,000 B.C. Professor Geikie, from astronomical calculations, puts the coldest period at 210,000 years ago. Drayson shows that, by his mode of calculating, the countries in which such an occurrence as a deluge would be noted—Egypt, Central India, and Asia—the climate has undergone no changes for 6,000 years. Further, that, if any changes were observable 8,000 years ago, they would be seen by people in high northern regions; but they have left no records. Hence, all that writers 2,000 years ago could learn would be from traditions handed down from 4,000 years before their time. He has collected some of these from various sources. The Hindoo tradition is that the world is renewed every 12,000 years, after a deluge, this being their seventh period. The Persians have a similar tradition. The Chaldeans had a planetary period for an entire revolution of the universe, “a great year;” during the winter period, a deluge; during the summer period, a conflagration. The Egyptians noticed the sun changed its course during 11,340 years; but it happily made “no alteration in the climate of Egypt.” The Greeks had some such tradition. The Bible writers come nearest the Chaldeans, for they have a deluge and expect a conflagration, after which—a great desideratum—there were to be “a new heaven and a new earth.” I have elsewhere shown that the dates of the past deluge are exceedingly variable and quite uncertain; and the expected conflagration partakes of the same fluctuation. It was frequently expected for ages; but, during the present century, it occupies only the minds of certain sects of religionists, who subsist and flourish on the ever-varying interpretations of unfulfilled prophecy.

There is one statement by the Duke of Argyll which certainly casts a doubt upon orthodox teaching. He says he knows that “the introduction of new species has been a work carried on constantly and continuously during vast but unknown periods of time. The whole face of animated nature has been changed, not once, but frequently; not suddenly for the most part, perhaps not suddenly in any case, but slowly and gradually, and yet completely” (“*Primeval Man*,” p. 41). Here the records of all time, whether sacred or profane, are completely superseded and cast aside by an appeal to the science of Palæontology, which, he says, “has most certainly revealed” the facts on which its statement is based. Yet it is commonly said that science and revelation agree when properly understood!

Supposing a time when the soil was much warmer than now, the time required to reduce the temperature from what it was to the present average—that is, from one-tenth of a degree Fahr. per foot in descending through the strata to about one-fiftieth of a degree Fahr.—was, according to Thompson, nearly 100 million years. Some writers maintain that, at that speed of change, the time must be more remote than he

puts it to account for sufficient heat to produce the uniform and tropical character of the first vegetation. The similarity of the remains found in coal all over the globe, and the fact that most of them were embedded where they grew, indicate that, whenever its formation began, it must have arisen from similar causes acting all over the earth's surface, with similar results. Sir J. Lubbock gives the mean temperature for the coldest month in the year in London, for nearly 100,000 years, as 40 degrees, and for 300,000 years before as 20 degrees.

As regards the time when coal was formed, it is difficult to imagine any figures representing any idea of a definite kind. The true coal beds of Wales represent a sea level of former times, and the vertical displacement is calculated to be sufficient to have brought the summit of the Alps to the sea level. Professor Phillips estimated the time at half a million of years; Mr. Hull at 640,000 years. Mr. T. P. Barkus, F.G.S., finds not only plants, trees, fishes, and reptiles, but also evidences of four-footed creatures and mammals. He sees no reason why numerous mammalia may not have existed, since vegetation was abundant; as also fish, reptile, and insect life.

Drayson, by taking one revolution of the pole of the earth for each seam or layer of coal, requires two million years to produce sixty layers. But in some beds there are as many as eighty layers of coal. In a similar way, he calculates the formation of Shakespeare's Cliff and Flamborough Head took 6,400,000 years. But above this chalk there are the eocene, miocene, pliocene, and diluvian deposits, requiring many additional changes.

Professor Huxley ("Lay Sermons," p. 195; 1877), speaking at Norwich, says: "The area on which we now stand has been first sea and then land for at least four alternations, and has remained in each of these conditions for a period of great length." Referring to the changes since the time of the chalk as vast in amount as they were slow in progress, he says "the chalk is vastly older than Adam himself," and crocodiles abounded "long ages before chalk was deposited." On the chalk are stumps of trees, as they grew—firs, oaks, yews, beeches, and alders, some of them three feet in diameter; and remains of elephants and of other great wild beasts. He finds it impossible to say when the chalk sea ended its existence, and left the chalk as we find it; but he considers the formations in which the remains of extinct generations of men have been found are not older than the drift, or boulder clay. Since the chalk was deposited the Pyrenees, Alps, Himalayas, and Andes have appeared, "and the cretaceous sea flowed over the sites of Sinai and Ararat." Before the chalk was deposited "all the great classes of animals, beasts of the field, and things that dwell in the waters flourished on the globe long ages," very few being

identical with those now living. The formation of 1,000 feet of chalk he estimates at 12,000 years ; but there are facts connected with the growth, life, and death of the creatures forming the deposit which make its probable duration much longer. He regards it as certain that the time when England, France, Germany, Poland, Russia, Egypt, Arabia, and Syria were covered by a deep sea was of considerable duration.

Page disputes the position that a higher and more uniform climate prevailed in the primeval epochs of our earth, and holds that the physical conditions of life have been much the same throughout every period of its existence. Certain latitudes of the Northern hemisphere appear to have had a more genial climate ; but this he attributes to the varying distinctions of land and sea, and to warmer oceanic currents, and not to the interior heat of the earth. With regard to the time required for changes in climate, in sea and land, the elevations and depressions of the earth's crust, and the necessary re-arrangements of life attending these changes, if expressed in terms of years or centuries, like the distances of astronomers, "the mind would altogether fail to grasp the conception of its immensity" ("Past and Present Life of the Globe").

All are agreed that there was a different climate in Europe before the present or historic period ; but as to the cause and time there is nothing but conjecture. No further proof of this need be quoted than Professor Dawson, with his 8,000 years and a deluge, and Professor Quatrefages, with his 100,000 years and the retreating glaciers. With a view to arrive at some definite cause and time, Lieutenant-Colonel Drayson submitted an astronomical criterion. The main result of his geometrical demonstration (or what he holds to be such) is that we have evidence for at least 300 years, and probably for 1,800, and that there has been no alteration in the earth's axis ; but we have direct evidence that for 1,800 years this axis has changed its direction as regards the heavens, and during all these centuries it has steadily marked out a portion of that same circle which 15,000 years ago caused an obliquity of the ecliptic sufficient to produce the glacial epoch.

The rotation of the earth on its axis appears to be uniform, and caused day and night in ages past, the same as now ; while its revolution round the sun must have through all time produced changes of seasons, as it does still. The third motion of the earth, the change in the direction of the earth's axis in regard to external objects, effects what is called the "precession of the equinox," and this latter change causes the earth's axis to point to a different direction each year, the sidereal year indicating the complete revolution of the earth round the sun. Mr. Croll's calculations respecting the variations of the eccentricity

city of the earth's orbit, together with the precession of the equinoxes, if accepted as accounting for changes in climate, lead to the conclusion that no important changes have taken place during the past 60,000 years. Professor Geikie's estimate as to the work of rivers gives 180,000 years for hollowing out such a valley as that of the Somme. As regards the age of the earth itself, it is now commonly placed in a secondary position, instead of being regarded as older than the sun, moon, and stars, as set forth in Genesis. But, supposing it to be of similar age, Professor Helmholtz calculates that the solar system has been in existence for 500 million years. Herschell maintains that gravitation has undergone no change from a high antiquity. Laplace showed that the plane of the earth's orbit has not varied more than a few degrees during uncountable ages. Take the popular theory that at some unknown period in the remote past the earth was covered by water, and the interior mass was in a state of igneous fusion. The time required to cool down is estimated by Professor Sir William Thompson to be not less than 20 million years, and not more than 400 million years. Sir William believes that life on the earth—continuity of life—must be limited to "some such period as 100 million years."

Bewildering as are some of the geological figures quoted, they are all based on the study of deposits or sediment. Now, I submit that these sediments imply the existence of moving waters and mighty rivers, and these imply the existence of rain, and this implies the action of the sun on this earth. Whether vegetation could exist without this motion may be doubtful; but for animal life it appears essential, and both have been found in the oldest known rocks. Hence my inference is that the earth and living things date back as long as the sun has shone upon the earth. But, if that time could be fixed, I doubt if the human mind could grasp the figures required to express it. All we can say is that the accumulated facts, and reasoning based upon them, only indicate to our feeble imagination continual change and the indestructibility of matter.

CHARLES C. CATTELL.

THE TRUTHSEEKER.

PART II.—*Concluded.*

NOT as a child, whose undeveloped mind
 Is taught its mother's primer, catching words
 Interpreted by others, until sense becomes
 Unquestioned faith, unvitalised by thought,
 Was Bible language taught me ; but when mind
 Went hand in hand with language was it read,
 Till judgment followed reading. Like to fruit
 Untasted, oft-desired, biding my time,
 I came to it with curiosity
 And spiritual yearnings. As I turned
 With eager hand the book of Genesis,
 The legend of Creation stirred my mind,
 First with amazement, then with bitter doubt ;
 Till, like a skeleton, at my feast of hope
 Falsehood upreared its gaunt, unsightly bones,
 And turned the fruit to ashes. There I read
 The crude inventions of a pen debased
 By ignorance and folly ; one who wrote
 Of that he knew not, violating laws
 Of natural science and of common sense.
 I read what men still read and hold to be
 A revelation of Omniscient God,
 Whose first wise act was to call forth the light
 Three days before the sun, the source of light,
 Illumed the earth ! That he created man
 "In His own image," and then tempted him
 With evil, "planted by Him," in his midst,
 And, when his weakness yielded, punished him—
 Nor him alone, but through succeeding time
 Stained all humanity with one man's sin :
 That, though foreknowing sin would rule the world,
 Through processes incestuous peopled it ;
 Until, "repenting in His heart" His acts,
 By reason of their failure, swept it all
 To swift destruction—to repeople it
 With self-same natures, which, in turn, became
 Selfish, licentious, bloody, and debased,
 For generations onward. So I traced

From page to page the inane narrative,
 Which lowered Omnipotence to impotence,
 Wisdom to folly, Justice to revenge,
 And God himself to an incarnate fiend,
 Compared with whom, methought, the Pagan Jove
 Was a conception worthier human faith,
 Since he at least fulfilled his own desires.
 Thus, from its poisoned fountain, flows the stream
 Through Bible history, old and new alike ;
 Until the herbage of morality
 Growing along its banks is dank with weeds
 Of legendary falsehood—weeds unplucked
 For want of hands unfettered by the creeds,
 And tongues to unteach hideous fallacies.
 I wonder not that in those darkened days
 Credulity was fed by fabled lore ;
 But that, with human progress, men still give
 Sanction divine to falsehood palpable.
 Nor doth the Christian doctrine lift the soul
 To that sublime conception which inspires
 Faith in a power of wisdom absolute.
 As Buddha, Brahma, Mohammed declared
 Their origin divine, so Jesus taught,
 To gather followers and inspire belief ;
 But taught a purer faith with higher aims.
 Had they who wrote, in after years, the acts
 Of this Reformer, left his image free
 From supernatural gilding, he had stood
 To-day the best example of a man,
 Whose honest precepts, blamelessness of life,
 And self-devotion gave no false excuse
 For wars of factions, persecutions, crimes,
 Through which to found religions in his name.
 Grand in his simple goodness, he would stand
 A type for men to copy, not for feuds,
 Wherein opinions strive to reconcile
 God's power to act with " schemes " belying it.
 Thus, had the seekers taken as their guide
 The teachings, pure and simple, of their Christ,
 Not the decisions of contentious minds,
 The vote of a majority of men,
 Three centuries after he of Nazareth died,
 We should have had no triple mystery—
 The fungus growth of the divine idea
 Of Indian-Brahma worship, but a faith
 In consonance with undisputed laws,
 Binding and not dividing human hearts.
 The Churchman's dogma is a " Triune God,"
 Whose mortal issue for a space of years,

Through sufferings, temptations, miracles,
 And death, by men who deemed their action just,
 Did make "atonement" for the sins of men,
 Atonement by Himself, and through Himself,
 For sins of those He did Himself create,
 Appeasing His own wrath against His own,
 By persecution of His carnate self.
 All pre-ordained from early history,
 And after centuries of time had rolled,
 And hecatombs of God-created souls
 Had lived and died in darkness unredeemed !
 I pause, not to attempt analysis
 Of that which reason's crucible would burn
 To ashes of absurdity, in which
 No spark would live of a Divine control
 Whose spirit stoopeth not to complex schemes
 To carry out His instantaneous will ;
 Nor will I seek to fathom the abyss
 Of that profound credulity which finds
 In such stupendous folly ground for faith.
 But, now that eighteen centuries have passed,
 I ask, How stands it with the "world redeemed ?"
 The land where Christianity arose
 Knows it no more, nor him who founded it ;
 But, in its place, a new religion rears
 Its sacred crescent o'er the trampled cross,
 In number of its followers equalling,
 And in its compact faith exceeding far,
 The sub-divided creeds of Christendom ;
 For in religion all experience shows
 That ignorance consolidates, as clay
 Maintains itself in firm solidity
 Till pierced by solar heat. So, when the sun
 Of science and of reason pierces it,
 It falls a crumbling mass. To-day the faith
 Of Gautama controls one-third the world,
 And Veda's precepts countless millions more,
 While but a fraction of the human race—
 Nor by conviction all—acknowledge Christ ;
 And this same fraction, in opposing creeds
 Disputing and disputed, stands apart,
 Denouncing each the other's unbelief.
 I ask it, in all reverence and love,
 What would the judgment be of human schemes
 By like results to this were weighed by man ?
 And whence the failure ? Why, at this late day
 Are press and pulpit waging all the power
 Of argument, persuasion, and appeal
 To force conviction upon doubtful minds,

And prove as true what truth itself would prove ?
 Truth is not truth that is illogical,
 And men are right to seek the test of proof—
 Not algebraic rules, but common sense.
 And this is Bible teaching : “ Prove all things.”
 If but a single dogmatist could prove,
 As undisputed facts, his own belief,
 Then would they all, these millions “ unredeemed,”
 Accept and worship at his special shrine.
 Religions are opinions ; prove but one,
 And all men mingle in a common faith.
 Since nothing, then, is known beyond dispute,
 Where minds in unison can all agree,
 Some minds, rejecting that which seemeth false,
 Must find their peace in waiting. This we know—
 That in an all-sufficient world we dwell ;
 Sufficient, if we choose to make it so ;
 Placed here in all-unconscious helplessness—
 A cloud of atoms, coming, going, gone,
 And knowing not the wherefore of it all.
 Shall wisdom beat its brains against the wall
 Of Nature’s storehouse, in the vain attempt
 To break the boundaries of mystery,
 Or seek to solve what is insolvable ;
 While round us spreads a world to humanise,
 Millions to lift from ignorance and sloth
 Into the daily life of mortal needs,
 The daily recognition of good deeds ?
 Enough the task to lesson human ills,
 To bind more close to each dissevered hearts,
 And turn the beauteous earth to beauteous use,
 Till men grow better with goodwill to men.

“ But,” sayeth one, “ wouldst take away my faith :
 My cross of comfort, my belief in heaven,
 My strong dependence on a higher Will,
 On that immortal life for which I yearn ?”
 To such I answer : Whatsoe’er thy faith,
 If growth of sound conviction, bearing fruit
 Of evidence sufficient for thy soul,
 Live up to it, if it bring peace to thee.
 To him who findeth comfort in his cross,
 His saints, his virgin, or his miracles ;
 Not leaning in weak ignorance, but strong
 In the sound culture of intelligence,
 That seeks, not shirks, the intercourse of minds,
 The analysis of reason and of fact—
 I say, ’tis well, even if self-deceived.
 But be not thou intolerant of those,

Thy fellows, in the jostling road of life,
Who, seeking truth like thee, like thee reject
What seemeth weak, untenable, or false.
For, whether we are born to live again
Or born to perish ; whether Godhead reigns,
Or angels, saints, and devils dwell in space
And influence our lives ; whether a hell
Or heaven in some imagined region lies,
Waiting for our poor undeveloped souls,
To end life's problem, by a God designed—
Being unproved, are theoretical.
Let men indulge their theories if they will,
And they who find their happiness therein
Live after their convictions, undisturbed.
Religions oft are safeguards to the State,
Belief in something higher than the State
Compelling acquiescence to the law,
And strengthening morals in communities.
For even he who scorns the Pagan's creed,
And cannot bow with him to senseless gods,
Admits him better for his blind belief.
Not this do I deny ; I but condemn
That false and weak conventionality
Whereby our churches fill their cushioned pews
With comfortable worshippers, content,
For lack of courage, or convenience sake,
To utter creeds thier conscience sanctions not.
I blame not those among them who conceive
Their duty done in taking what is given,
Obedient to a helpless habitude ;
But those who, sheltered by devotion's mask,
Fear to proclaim the truth that in them lies.
Compared to such, all honour unto those
Who dare to question and investigate ;
Who, flinging off the yoke conventional,
Dare disavow the God men make for men—
A God impossible to common sense,
Made up of contradictions ; love divine,
Yet wreaking human vengeance ; source of good,
Yet asking to be prayed to tempt us not ;
Ordaining, and yet powerless to perform ;
Or, worse, performing not, though capable ;
Foreknowing, and yet judging to condemn ;
Whose acts are contravened and stultified
By every law of science and of fact.

The world of human thought stands never still,
And as it moves the false in things decays,
Slowly, but surely, and oft unperceived.

To-day, in spite of plenitude of power,
 Hereditary customs, walls of pride,
 And outward pomp of inward sanctity,
 The Church is trembling with apostacy.
 The master-minds of thinkers are astir,
 And reason draws its long-neglected blade
 To pierce the mask of dogma, and lay bare
 The sacred truths of science; Churchmen wake
 From pleasing slumber to defend themselves,
 Or gather in their flocks, as if a wolf
 Of evil prowled within the fold.
 Perchance 'twere better if the shepherds sought
 The evil that affrights them, and, with love
 And honest self-inspection, asked themselves
 If their own consciences are void of blame
 For teachings inconsistent and unsound.
 The wolf they fear, may be the Spirit of Truth,
 The "friend-in-need" of shepherd and of flock.

Friends, I have given you thus the candid thoughts
 That rise within me, and which give me peace;
 Nor clothed my words in strains poetical,
 But in simplicity, befitting truth.
 May you find comfort in them, though 'twere best,
 Out of the tumult of conflict doubt,
 For each to seek solution for himself.
 If there be those among you whose self-poise
 Is insufficient to sustain themselves
 On rules of reason simply, and who ask
 What "substitute" there is for faiths dethroned,
 What "hope" to lean on when religion fails,
 Let them seek strength in patient watchfulness,
 That mind may cure the mind's infirmities
 Through searchings of its inner consciousness.
 Despair not, for despair is folly's crown,
 And hope is reason's handmaid. They who write
 Of the despair of irreligious minds
 Deceive through self-deception. Not belief,
 Nor unbelief, unhinges intellect,
 But the deranging doubts of feeble minds
 Which inconsistent mysteries evolve;
 As the mirage of deserts cheats the eyes
 Of self-deluded pilgrims. Cherish hope;
 It dwells in all conditions, and exists
 A natural element in the heart of man;
 Not the less strong if it be founded on
 A trust, consistent, rational, sublime—
 That, if there be a Power Supreme o'er all,
 Then Power and Goodness are identical;

And that, howe'er we suffer, as we must,
For violation of the laws of life,
An "Infinite Wisdom" and a "Love Divine"
Would not create the creatures of His will
To govern them with passions or revenge.
Happy the man who this conviction holds ;
Not writhing, worm-like, in the pangs of doubt,
Nor falling prostrate in his helplessness,
Besecching "to be saved ;" but strong in strength
Of his own manhood and intelligence ;
Content to rest his simple faith in this :
Truth for his God, and Duty for his guide.

EDGAR RICHTON.

THE POPULAR RELIGIOUS FAITH.

THE DOCTRINE OF DESIGN—(*Concluded*).

IN previous papers we have shown that adaptation to an end is by no means always a proof of design, since such useful inventions as the telescope, the safety-valve, the Gobelin scarlet, glass, the screw propeller, and so on, were purely accidental discoveries. We furthermore have shown that adaptation to an end, which fails to accomplish that end, is a proof either of bad workmanship or faulty design, and that in Nature millions upon millions of these failures beset us on every side: thus huge loads of beech nuts and acorns fall to the ground, and are eaten by swine, squirrels, and field-mice, instead of growing into beech trees and oak trees, or else rot and perish where they fall; and myriads of spawn never develop into fish. In fact, the failures are the rule, and the successes the exception. If 999 watches of every thousand were only fit for road metal, it would show most wretched workmanship or defective design. It would show that the watches which keep time do so by accident rather than by contriving wisdom.

We now come to the third idea, that even when the design is fully carried out the end accomplished is, in many cases, wholly inconsistent with our ideas of wisdom and love, impartiality and justice. A parent which, like Jacob, has his favourite sons is most reprehensible, and in the story of Jacob the foolish fondness of the father produced its crop of misery and mischief. In the popular religious faith our notions of justice and impartiality are perpetually outraged. "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated" (Rom. ix. 13) is the rule of God's dealings with his creatures; but why the generous, open-hearted, careless, impulsive Esau should have been the object of God's hatred, and the sneaking, lying, selfish, mean-spirited Jacob the object of God's love, is past understanding. Jacob could haggle with his brother over a cup of broth, and cheat him out of his birthright, when hunger made him promise anything. Jacob could sneak like a hound to his father's bedside, with a lie in his right hand to defraud his brother of his blessing. Jacob could cheat Laban out of his flocks and herds by despicable artifices. Jacob, when danger seemed at hand, was not ashamed to thrust his wives and women to the fore to bear the brunt of his brother's fury, while he himself sneaked in the rear with most contemptible

cowardice ; yet this lying varlet, this unmitigated scoundrel, this over-reaching vagabond, is the "Jacob loved," the elect of God, the pattern patriarch, the *beau idéal* of that Being who was for ever enforcing the fact that He is the "god of Abraham, the god of Isaac, and the god of Jacob," the three models of the sons of men, the paragons of his handi-works, the beloved of the beloved, the *crème de la crème* of the whole earth. See there to what a godly height man can attain ! See there what the God of the whole earth most dearly loves ! See there to what he sets his seal ! "I thy God am the God of Jacob." Do you not admire his choice ? Do you not acknowledge his wisdom ? Do you not praise his justice ? Will you not walk in the steps of his beloved ? If God is "no respecter of persons," why did he hate Esau and love Jacob, regardless of their merits, and even before they were born ? Why did he choose one nation, and that peculiarly stiff-necked and rebellious, to be his own favoured and peculiar people ? Why did he select one line and one family of that nation, the tribe of Judah and family of David the adulterer, to write his great name there ? This arbitrary partiality is without doubt a rock of offence in the popular religious faith of Christendom, and wholly irreconcilable with the boast that God is no respecter of persons. The very title he has chosen, "the god of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," gives the lie to even justice and perfect impartiality. This, however, is only remotely connected with our present subject—viz., that even when adaptation to an end answers its purpose it is by no means always a proof of wisdom based on justice, benevolence, and love.

Take first the whole tribe of birds and beasts of prey. No doubt the beaks and talons of vultures, hawks, and eagles are adapted to tear in pieces other living creatures on which they prey : so are the teeth and claws of wild beasts. But why is this ? Where is the proof of "*even love*" in such an arrangement ? Why should the sparrow and the dove be made the prey of the hawk ? Why should their whole life be a life of dread ? Why should they live, and move, and have their being in ceaseless terror, and at last be torn piece-meal by a fellow bird ? And why should that bird be endowed with an instinct to raven on the less vital parts before it ends their agony in death ? Is this impartial justice ? Is this omnipotent love ?

If you had two sons, would you arm one with a sword, and fill his mind with rancour against his brother ? Would you voluntarily make the life of the peaceful brother a hell upon earth and a perpetual dread ? Grant that the sword is an instrument adapted to wound and to slay ; grant that malice is adapted to the use of the sword, does such adaptability show the wisdom of the father in putting such an instrument in his son's hand to distress and murder his brother ? That is the

question. Grant that hooked beaks and canine teeth, talons and claws, are adapted to rend and tear off the flesh from living animals, does the furnishing of animals with such instruments of mischief show the benign wisdom of the creator? That is the question. Is the ravaging of birds and beasts of prey on harmless, unoffending animals a proof of divine love? That is the question.

When the officers of the Inquisition seized upon a victim and put him to the torture it was their custom to attack him in the least vital parts in order to prolong the agony. They would draw out the nails of the hands and feet, pluck out the tongue, scrape off the skin from the flesh, gouge out the eyes, fill the body with pins, crush the joints one by one by the blows of a wheel, singe the raw flesh with burning torches, and so kill the victim by inches to show the greatness of their love. Well, can we find no parallel to this in what is called Nature? I think we can. But tell me this, who made the mind, according to the popular religious faith? Who fashioned these Inquisitors behind and before? Who made them what they were and are, and armed them with Christian malice? Who but he who made the birds of the air, and fishes of the sea, and beasts of the forest, and the cattle on the 1,000 hills? He made the dove with its silver wings, and the vulture to revel in its raven. He made the sportive lamb, the type of innocence; and the tiger to delight in the shriek of agony and the taste of blood.

Whose agents are the Inquisition? Are they not the agents of the Church? Whose agents are the sword, the famine, the noisome beast, and the pestilence? Ezekiel tells us (xiv. 21) they are four of the servants of the Christian's God. These demons of death are sent at God's pleasure to desolate or devastate a land because some David chooses to take a census of his people, or some insignificant Achan chooses to be a thief, or some Saul chooses to show mercy when he was commanded by the prophet to steel his heart against all pity.

Let us take one or two examples, for we must hurry up our subject. The cuckoo lays its eggs in the nest of another bird, kicks out the eggs it finds there, and forces the stranger to rear foundling cuckoos instead of its own offspring. Where, we ask, is the divine justice and equal love of such instincts? Is it not of a piece with Pharaoh and Moses, Esau and Jacob, the one hated and the other loved? Are we not told that God raised up Pharaoh on purpose that he might harden his heart? Yea, for this purpose have I raised him up, to show—not the evil of sin, not the beauty of holiness, not justice, mercy, and truth—but to show my power (Exodus ix. 16), my arbitrary power; not that "I am no respecter of persons," but that I can do as I list with the children of men.

We have other examples in the insect world. The bee is the type

of industry and good order ; the moth of frivolity and folly. " Esau have I hated, and Jacob have I loved." The Jacob-like moth flutters about the hive, watching to catch the bees off their guard, and then steal into the citadel. Once there, the truant proceeds to a quiet corner, and there deposits its thousand eggs in the wax. In due time the eggs develop into grubs, and the grubs eat their way hither and thither through the wax, lining it with a silken web, which the bee-sting cannot pierce. So great are the ravages of these parasites that the whole year's labour of the bees is wrecked, and the proper colony turned out of doors to seek for shelter in another home. Where, I ask, is the justice of this? Design there may be ; but it is the design of burglars and freebooters, not that of a benevolent father, with even-handed justice and even-handed love. Take another case—the ichneumon fly. The wasp builds its nest with care and diligence, and the burglar fly steals into the house. Here it watches and waits till the wasp, with great labour, has stored her home with caterpillars sufficient for her whole brood. This done, the mason wasp carefully closes up the entrance of its nest with a strong barricade of kneaded clay. It is of no use. The ichneumon fly, furnished with a toothed borer, proceeds to break through the barricade ; and then, with its long ovipositor, inserts its eggs at the very bottom of the nest. The eggs of the burglar, being hatched into grubs, devour the offspring of the native wasp and all the caterpillars so painfully collected ; and, having so done, make their way out into the open air. We allow design in the fly's wimble and egg depositor ; but, again, we say it is the design of a brigand and a thief. It is the design of an infamous Brandt, creeping insidiously into the colony of the Acadians, stealing their stores, and driving them, with pitiless cruelty, from their houses and homes. It is just of a piece with Joshua and his freebooters, who slew the natives of Palestine, and took possession of their land. It is not such design that we should look for in a wise and loving god, who made both the wasp and the fly, and whose mercy, we are told, "is over all his works."

With one more example we must conclude. It shall be what we are all too familiar with—the cabbage caterpillar. There is a fly which makes this caterpillar its victim, and might furnish a hint of cruelty even to the Spanish Inquisition. The fly lights on the back of the caterpillar, and, digging into it between the rings, deposits below the skin its several eggs, to the number of thirty or forty. The caterpillar winces as the egg-depositor pierces it ; but the fly is regardless of the gives. The eggs are hatched, and the parasites live on the body erpillar. And, what is certainly the very refinement of cruelty, y or forty parasites avoid eating the vital parts as long as

possible, because the dead body would not suit their palate. They live on the caterpillar without killing it ; and, when the creature dies, the flies make off to spin their cocoons before the coming winter. Here is design ; but what design ! What diabolical refinement of cruelty ! what sickening instinct ! And if, according to the popular religious faith, all this is directly to be ascribed to the God of nature and of providence, it is not true that he sees with equal eye, as God of all, a hero perish or a sparrow fall.

The popular faith cannot be the true faith, for Nature cries aloud through all her works : “ Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated ! ” but an all-wise, all-loving, and all-powerful Creator can be no such “ respecter of persons.”

JULIAN.

RELIGION AND WAR.

FIFTH PAPER—(*Concluded*).

Is it much to be wondered at that, in writing the life of Christ, the historians of an inexact and unscientific age should tell us his birth was heralded by angels who sang, "On earth peace, goodwill towards men," and should magnify every simple fact and incident and deed of his life into a miracle? Is it even surprising that he should come to be worshipped as one of the highest gods? It is worth noticing, too, that he expressly forbade religious persecution. When his over-zealous disciples would have called down fire from heaven on his opponents, observe the "sweet reasonableness" of his rebuke: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." Among his last words were these: "Peace I leave with you;" "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another;" "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples."

During the eighteen centuries that have elapsed since then it has, indeed, often been said: "See how these Christians love one another;" but it has generally been said in irony. In this, as in so many other respects, there is certainly a tremendous discrepancy between the Christianity of the creeds and Churches and the Christianity of Christ himself. That sensational West End clergyman, the Rev. H. R. Haweis, who some time ago preached on "The Wickedness of Christianity," would have no lack of material, but rather an "*embarras de richesse*." Jesus appears to have been undogmatic and pacific. It is instructive to notice how the Church gradually lost this character. The immediate successors of Jesus write sometimes in his spirit concerning peace. "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without wrangling;" "The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace;" "From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence? Ye.....covet, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war." Yet these very writers, soon after the restraining presence of their Master was removed from them, began to be dogmatic and polemical even among themselves; and the Church, like the infant Hercules, had early to strangle serpents in the shape of the questions of circumcision and preaching to the Gentiles. Within the covers of the

New Testament we have considerable evidence of that growth of dogma which the orthodox deem inspired development ; and the weird imagery of the closing Apocalypse seems to reflect the increase of a warlike temper in the Church.

For the first three centuries Christianity was not yet sufficiently powerful to wage war, till, at length, Constantine established it as the State religion of Rome. Thence, from that unholy alliance, there was generated in Christianity a worldly ambition, which never rested till it sat itself in the seat of the Cæsars, and placed its feet on the necks of kings. Thence we must date the origin of those long and bloody wars of Christendom—a list of such prodigious length that I cannot now enumerate them all, and even those I select I must not attempt to describe. Let me instance the forcible conversion of the Pagan Saxons by Charlemagne ; the eight Crusades against the Moslem Saracens, as well as the Crusade against the Christian Albigenses ; the wars of the rival Popes ; the wars of the Protestant Reformation in France, Germany, Switzerland, etc., including the Thirty Years' War ; Spain's Christian conquests in the New World ; English Puritans and Scottish Covenanters persecuted for religion, and retaliating when they had the power. Even this present century has witnessed the so-called "Holy Alliance ;" while the Crimean War, the Indian Mutiny, the Franco-German and the Russo-Turkish Wars, have all been more or less closely connected with some phase of Christianity, either as a cause, avowed or not, or as a pretext, or as an important element of a sanguinary strife.

What is the moral of all this ? What are the lessons to be learnt from our historical survey ? One most patent lesson is that religion is chiefly dangerous and hurtful when allied with political power. The most complete form of State Church was the Jewish theocracy, in which Church and State were absolutely identical. Did the Church and State mutually strengthen each other, or did this union tend to the ultimate destruction of both ? We may find our answer in the scattered and expatriated nation, and in the maimed religion, deprived of its hierarchy and of most of its ritual. But the religious wars of the Jews, horrible as they were, occupied but a small and insignificant theatre. The pernicious effects of the Hebrew teaching and spirit are more fully displayed in the daughter religions of Christianity and Islam, holding sway over such vast populations. But it is Christianity presided over by a Pope with temporal power, and Islam with a Sultan for its Caliph, that must be held responsible for the most terrible wars that have ever afflicted mankind. We saw that early Christianity waged no war until it became the State religion of the Roman Empire ; and the history of later Christianity shows us that, in proportion as the Church has regained its freedom, it has ceased to be an active cause of war. Thus Protestant

countries have waged fewer aggressive religious wars than Catholic countries, while the United States of America, with no State Church, have never engaged in a religious war. The temporal power of the Pope being now altogether a thing of the past, it may be hoped that the aggressive and internal religious wars of Western Christianity are also ended ; and, if ever the Moslem Caliphate should cease to be held by a Sultan, we might possibly see a like improvement in Islam.

But deeper, far deeper than the external union of Church and State, there is another cause of religious wars of particular interest to Agnostics—viz., the spirit of dogmatism in religion, the pretence to infallibility, the implication, if not the assertion, of finality in revelation, the assumption of “cocksureness” in the very domain where perfect knowledge is, from the nature of the case, unattainable and impossible. I have said nothing in this paper of the *ethics* of war. I have taken it for granted that war is sometimes justifiable, and that it does not seem likely that wars will cease entirely for some time to come. Of all wars, aggressive wars are most to be condemned ; and among aggressive wars those which seek to impose a religion on a people by the sword are the least justifiable of all. If we examine the history of religious wars, we shall find that, as far as they have been religious wars, they have been undertaken for reasons not more tangible, and for theories not more verifiable, than the subject-matter of the Cain and Abel dispute—the question, namely, whether Deity will kindly accept a present of corn, vegetables, and fruit, or is better pleased with an offering of fat mutton. It is necessary to call attention to this because it is patent that this spirit of dogmatism about dogmas, this opinionativeness about opinions, and this professed certitude about uncertainties still survives as an immense factor in human thought, and, if not counteracted, may again produce as dire results as in the past. What Evangelicals describe with such unctuous relish as “the accent of conviction” is just that to which we are most opposed. We by no means deny that there are eternal verities, and that man may attain to at least approximate certainty with respect to some of them ; but such a measure of knowledge has never yet been discovered in religious metaphysics. If it be asked what are the grounds for making such an assertion, it is sufficient reply to point to the continuous change in religious ideas and doctrines. If it be said that there is also no certainty of permanence in scientific theories, we reply that we object to dogmatism in science as much as in religion. True science, however, is not indissolubly wedded to theory, and is not greatly enamoured of any ; but there is this immense difference between science and religion, that in science we can usually verify as we go along ; but in religion, whatever changes may be made in a creed, it is only *opinion* still. There is plenty of room and plenty

of work for whatever is useful in Agnosticism—an Agnosticism to be met with in some of the best utterances of the Bible and other religious books, and compatible with the sincerest reverence for whatsoever things are worthy of reverence. It may be said that Agnosticism never made a martyr. Perhaps not, though peradventure for a “reverent Agnosticism” some would even dare to die. But, at all events, Agnosticism is incapable of founding that anomaly, a State Church; and it could never be guilty of that brutal folly, an aggressive religious war.

As religious wars have almost disappeared from civilisation, the most practical part of our subject is to inquire what may be said of religion (and particularly of the three religions discussed), as preventing war.

I must not now deal any more with the past; but I do not think that these great religions can claim to have made many efforts at peace-making which might not also be fairly attributed to the general development of civilisation and the secular improvement of mankind. Let us look at the present. In Islam’s account the credit for peace-making is nil. In that of Judaism it is also nil. If the religion of the Jews no longer incites them to war, neither does it at all influence them for peace; and their interest, as the chief speculators, army contractors, and financiers of the world, is bound up with war, rather than with peace. In Christendom there are four leading nations on the continent of Europe each possessing a million of soldiers. As for what we may now call the late war in the Soudan, our State Church confined its intervention to issuing special forms of prayer, asking God to take our side. The Jewish Church did the same. The charge which the *Pall Mall Gazette* brought against our priests, parsons, and pulpiteers is, on the whole, fairly sustained. Both during the Soudanese War and during our recent difficulty with Russia they were, for the most part, only “dumb dogs;” and it may be said of English religious bodies that their pacific utterances are about in inverse ratio to their orthodoxy. The State Church is muzzled on this question, and, like the bishops in the House of Lords, it must sit on the Government side. With Dissent it is a little better. The *Christian World* has contained admirable articles, demanding a new Peace Party, neither warlike nor supine, but pacific and truly patriotic. The Unitarian *Inquirer* has given us timely words on national unrighteousness. The utterances of individual preachers, such as Dr. Allon, Dr. Dale, and the Rev. Page Hopps, have formed honourable exceptions to a too general silence; while non-theological leaders, such as Messrs. Frederic Harrison and Bradlaugh, Professor Reesley, and others, have now, as heretofore, been prominent denouncers of national bloodletting.

One small body of Christians we expected, and not in vain, to address us on this subject with united voice and with no uncertain sound.

The Society of Friends, always consistent if unpractical, has renewed its testimony against the absolutely immoral, irreligious, and un-Christian nature of war. To them I say : "Go, labour on, ye friends of man ; the world has need of you, and cannot spare you yet. On this question of war you seem to me the only true Christians ; and, if I were careful to be orthodox—if I recognised the *supreme* authority of Christ—I must perforce think with you. While other Christians are groping in the fogs of casuistry, seeking to reconcile their bloody deeds with the Gospel of Peace, your unclouded intellects dwell in the upper ether of a splendid and sublime consistency. You seem to me the lineal descendants of those gentle idyllic shepherds who heard the angelic songs announcing the advent of the Prince of Peace. You I deem the true successors of those tender souls who heard the Master proclaim, from that mound by Galilee's lake, the blessedness of the peace-makers. Yours is the true apostolic succession to those favoured ones, to whom, in parting, he bequeathed the legacy of his own 'calm and deep peace.' One respectful word of warning I would address to the more conservative among you : Do not refuse to listen to new views of religious truth. To condemn the new as therefore untrue is not only to swerve from that first principle of Friends, that the spirit must judge of the letter, and not the letter of the spirit ; but it is also to foster a spirit which, as I have shown in this paper, is one of the most fruitful causes of religious war—the worst kind of that practice of war to which you are so earnestly opposed. On this subject of war, I bid you, 'Be not conformed to this world ;' but 'be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of' peace, 'forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain,' and may rest assured that one day the world, grown wiser, will be conformed to you."

J. ASHFORD JENKINSON.

PANONTISTIC FRAGMENTS.

LEIBNITZ.

At the University Leibnitz had studied the law with a view to active duty as a juriconsult; and it seemed as if he could never approach or treat any subject except as a special pleader and a diplomatist. Next to his insatiable curiosity he was tormented by the mania of reconciling things the most irreconcilable. The love of truth for the truth's sake never inspired him—was foreign to his nature. For the sake of superficial agreement everything divinest was to be sacrificed. Leibnitz made various attempts to demonstrate the identity of Platonism and Aristotelianism. Suppose he had been successful, what would have been the gain? Was it not better that Plato and Aristotle should each shine with his own glory as man and as thinker? The grand scheme of Leibnitz for the loving marriage of two fiercely-conflicting forces, Popery and Protestantism, overlooked the ferocious religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the religious persecutions of which Leibnitz was a contemporary, the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the gulph ever widening between Papal despotism and Protestant development, the extent to which Protestantism had transformed the social and political life of nations. Spite of all these and other things, Popery and Protestantism were to rush enthusiastically into each other's arms to gratify a pedant's whim. A still more mad and monstrous vision was that on the conformity of faith and reason. By argument on argument, by fact on fact, Spinoza had conclusively, triumphantly proved, what had been known from the very birth of philosophy, that Reason and Faith, without being necessarily foes, are not necessarily friends, and that each of them has an empire, instrumentalities, and objects of its own. Reason subjected to faith ceases to be reason, and faith ruled by reason is no longer faith. These are commonplaces; but, though commonplaces, Leibnitz mocked and defied them with his subtleties and ingenuities. The eulogists of Leibnitz pretend that he potently helped the victory of the dynamical over the mechanical in philosophical speculation. But what could be more mechanical than the Pre-established Harmony, the soul as a machine conjoined and co-operating with the body as a machine? And how repulsively, how intolerably mechanical was the God which the obstetrical manipulations of Leibnitzian optimism brought forth into the universe? Leibnitz is

ranked by his admirers with the foremost creative spirits. But he was remarkable rather for the vastness and variety of his attainments than for his creative power. He had the duplicity of the sophist, though perchance rather from intellectual intortion and intervolution than from moral defect.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

Read without partiality and without prejudice the book called the Acts of the Apostles, and you must at once be struck by its vulgarity. It is as prosaic as a law report or the record of a Parliamentary debate; but it is vulgar as well as prosaic. What a contrast to the Oriental simplicity and dignity and the holy glamour of the Gospels! Can sufficient reasons be assigned for the striking difference? Solve the enigma ye who can!

THE HARDNESS OF USURPERS.

In the sublime legend of Prometheus it is said, in reference to the usurping Zeus, that all who have recently gained power are hard-hearted and unrelenting. This is a weighty saying, and perhaps it is also a wise saying. But its general rather than its universal truth must be admitted. The most famous usurper of ancient times, Julius Cæsar, was remarkable for clemency; perished because he manifested to excess the spirit of forgiveness and mercy. And the most famous usurper of modern times, Napoleon Bonaparte, was neither cruel nor implacable, though the necessities of State or the exigencies of war might sometimes drive him to despotism and to a disregard of human life.

LEAD AND SILVER.

Cut lead, and it is for a moment as bright as silver; and never for more than a moment can you sharpen dull natures.

INDIFFERENCE.

There are few things more amusing than the affectation of indifference on the part of men who are not capable of a living interest in anything.

THE ORANGE TREE.

In the orange tree everything is odorous—the bark, the leaves, the flowers, the fruit. Thus the orange tree would be a delectation to men even if the fruit were not one of Nature's richest blessings. So likewise saintly souls would be a precious fragrance to the world even if they did not gladden the world by the divinest deeds.

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